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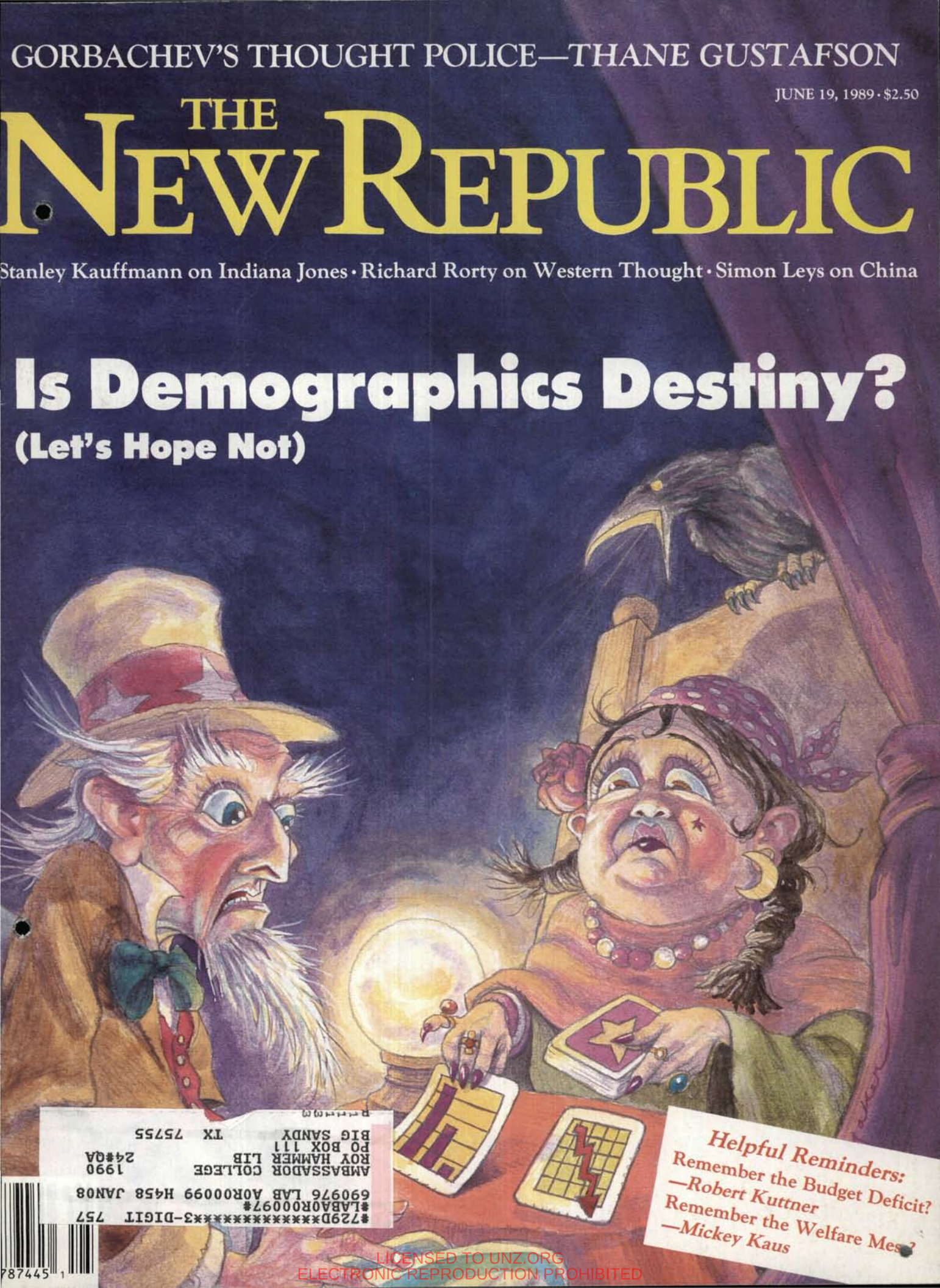

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

JUNE 19, 1989

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FROM WASHINGTON

Post Hock

Newspaper enthusiasts will recognize HEADLESS BODY IN TOPLESS BAR as a page-one screamer the *New York Post* printed back in 1983. This week that classic headline could serve as an approximate description of the *New York Post* itself. The body is headless because the editor, a talented young woman named Jane Amsterdam, has been fired by the owner, Peter Kalikow. As for the bar, it may not be quite topless any more—the *Post* now wears pasties as well as the G-string with which Rupert Murdoch outfitted it—but the Algonquin it's not.

There are unsettling signs of panic at the *Post*. In March a Sunday edition was started, ballyhooed, and suddenly folded when the money hemorrhage reached frightening proportions. There has been turmoil on the business side of the paper. Pete Hamill, a popular columnist, has announced his departure. Now Amsterdam, who in her year on the job restored most of the credibility the *Post* squandered during the 12 years Murdoch owned it, has been given the hook. What next? Kalikow—a rich real estate operator who is either "shy" (*Los Angeles Times*) or "bombastic" (*Washington Post*)—says he's committed to keeping the paper going despite annual losses in the millions. The end is not necessarily nigh—in its long history the *Post* has often been closer to extinction than it is now—but the present instability has a throe-like air. Doom has been intimated.

Who cares? A reasonable question, given that the *New York Post* is just another tabloid in a city that would still have two of them even if it folded. Its 550,000 readers could painlessly switch to the *Daily News* (circulation 1.2 million) or New York *Newsday* (circulation 200,000), or they could just turn on the TV. They'd have to get along without the gossipy Page Six, David Edelstein's movie reviews, and a mostly right-wing editorial page, but they'd live. Anyhow, it's hard to deny that on balance, over the last decade or so, the *Post* has subtracted from, rather than added to, the sum total of human enlightenment. So: who cares?

I do, actually, though I'll admit my reasons are quirky and sentimental. It's not just that I like the *Post*'s raffishness, though I do, or that I grieve when any newspaper, no matter how bad, goes down the drain, though I do. It's that for me, the *New York Post* represents a link to a lost world, the glorious world of 1950s journalism and liberalism.

In 1956, when I was 12, I transferred the love I had previously felt for the Brooklyn Dodgers to the newspapers I read about them in. I became a newspaper fanatic. Most days my father would bring home all seven New York papers, occasionally throwing in one of the non-mainstream dailies published in the city—the *Journal of Commerce*, the *Daily Worker*, the *Staten Island Advance*, or a foreign-language paper like *Il Progresso* or the *Daily Forward*.

I'd wade into that pile of newsprint as if it was surf. Among the morning papers the *News* and *Mirror* were for the masses, the *Times* and *Herald Tribune* for the classes. The afternoon papers divided themselves along ethno-political lines. The *Journal-American* was for Irish-Catholic conservatives. The *World-Telegram & Sun* was for white Protestant moderates. The *Post* was for liberals. Its ethnic appeal may be gathered from what, as a kid, I imagined to be the quintessential *Post* lead, kicking off a dramatic story about some injustice or other: "His only crime was being born a Jew." (Alternatively: "His only crime was being born a Negro.")

The *Post*'s gigantic page-one headlines, which long antedated Murdoch, made it seem that the news was always exciting, or at any rate that to be a newspaperman must be always exciting. The *Post* had Pogo; Jimmy Cannon in the sports section; Leonard Lyons and Earl Wilson (plus his B.W., or beautiful wife) on Broadway; and the lovelorn yenta Rose Franzblau, feeding fractured Freud to the frauleins. The *Post* had Herblock, and above all it had its columnists, every one of them a full-throated liberal: Max Lerner, Murray Kempton, Marquis Childs, William V. Shannon, Joseph P. Lash, Tristram Coffin, and the paper's great editor, James A. Wechsler. The *Post* taught me that J. Edgar Hoover, Joseph McCarthy, Joseph Stalin, Robert Moses, Walter Winchell, and the Hearst papers were Bad, while Adlai Stevenson, Herbert Lehman, Imre Nagy, and Mrs. Roosevelt were Good. The catechism has held up quite well.

The *Post*'s raison d'être was always political. It was founded in 1801 by Alexander Hamilton and some friends as a

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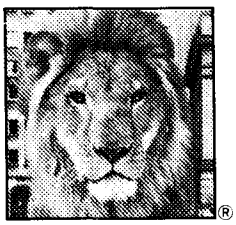

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CORRESPONDENCE

Westward Ho

To the editors:

Jacques Rupnik rightly points out alternative future paths for Poland and Hungary ("Bloc Busters," May 22), but his understanding of "Finlandization" is unnecessarily restricted to Western economic influence. Just back from a meeting at Jagiellonian University in Cracow concerning liberalization in Poland, I am struck with how important it is for American and Western European academics, journalists, and writers to talk with their counterparts in Eastern Europe. The days of "socialism with a human face" in Eastern Europe have given way, at least among some intellectuals and dissidents, to emphatic support for capitalism, and liberal democracy. Along with Peter Collier, David Horowitz, Joshua Muravchik, Ronald Radosh, and James Denton from the National Forum Foundation, I stressed the common *Western* home including Europe and the United States at the Jagiellonian University meeting. We discussed American domestic politics and Central America policy, human rights policy, the importance of the Atlantic alliance for liberalization in Eastern Europe, and the moral imperative for Polish relations with Israel. The message was warmly received.

But now is not the time to entertain, as Rupnik appears to, visions of a "neutralized Central Europe" that would supposedly speed change in Eastern Europe by reducing the threat to the Soviet empire. Liberalization in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe is following a period of Western firmness in the 1980s, a policy called containment. Eastern European dissidents understand that an erosion of Western Europe's Atlanticist ties would dramatically reduce Western ability to speak up for a free and democratic Eastern Europe. If we want Polish and Hungarian parliamentarians to debate the foreign and defense policy of the Warsaw Pact, we should not be talking about abandoning Central Europe.

The common European home long ago became a common Western home. Just as American policy has struggled to create a Westernized Germany, so the next frontier is the reincorporation of Poland and Hungary into that common Western home. *Glasnost*, like deterrence, works both ways. Advocates of political and economic liberalism should speak their piece in the East.

JEFFREY HERF
Urbana, Illinois

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History Lessons

To the editors:

One can say about David Hendrickson's review of my book *The American Age* ("Trivial Pursuits," May 1) what Mencken said about Warren G. Harding's use of the English language: it is "so bad that a certain grandeur creeps into it." The distortions and unsubstantiated charges are too numerous for an item-by-item response. One of those charges, however, is that among the "number of embarrassing mistakes" is my handling of Jefferson's Louisiana diplomacy and his use of presidential power. Hendrickson lists none of those "mistakes"; he simply and irresponsibly declares they exist.

He charges that Whig and Democratic diplomacy "is neglected or misunderstood." Wrong. I use and cite the new political history that has appeared in the past generation to demonstrate, in an analysis that runs over eight pages, that a fascinating and predictable correlation existed between Whigs and commercial expansion and between Democrats and landed expansion.

Hendrickson charges that my view of U.S. anti-revolutionary policies since the 1790s (a key theme in the book) is based too much on economic determinism, and that nowhere do I "undertake a systematic investigation of the problem." Wrong. There are more than 45 index entries that identify for the hurried reader where such an investigation can be found for different eras of U.S. history. He charges that the "utter failure of our studied attempt at neutrality [in the 1930s] is hardly mentioned." Wrong. There are at least 22 pages analyzing FDR's and the Isolationists' foreign policies.

Hendrickson claims that "the emphasis placed from the beginning on the principles of self-determination, nonintervention, and the balance of power is almost wholly lost in LaFeber's account." Flatly wrong. For example, besides the 11 index entries under "self-determination principle," all three concepts are discussed in—indeed shape—such pivotal chapters as those on the diplomacy of John Quincy Adams and Dwight Eisenhower, to take but two instances. Hendrickson and I are really separated by his reluctance to accept how contradictions in those principles have misshaped U.S. diplomacy and my insistence that the contradictions and their unfortunate results be confronted and thought through.

WALTER LAFEBER
Ithaca, New York

David Hendrickson replies:

In his account of Jefferson's Louisiana

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JUNE 19, 1989

ONE FOR THE GIPPER

Playing to the crowd has its pitfalls. In 1986, Ronald Reagan went to the Reykjavik summit hungry for applause and came within a hair of doing something awesomely stupid: agreeing to largely dismantle the system of nuclear deterrence that has kept world war at bay for nearly a half century. George Bush recently went to NATO's 40th anniversary looking for applause. Smarting from a solid week of op-ed griping about his vision shortage, he unveiled a fresh, moderately dramatic arms-reduction initiative—a seeming departure from his laboriously formulated and highly boring policy of patient waiting known as "status quo plus." The proposal proved not only politically successful—it helped avert an untimely intramural squabble—but geopolitically sound. Bush, unlike Reagan in 1986, seems to understand how peace is kept.

Bush's headline-maker was his offer to withdraw 30,000 U.S. troops from Europe—20 percent of our combat forces there (and, not incidentally, enough to save billions per year). This cut would depend on the Soviets' withdrawing and demobilizing 290,000 troops, leaving their forces in Eastern Europe at 275,000—parity with U.S. troops in Western Europe. Gorbachev, having previously agreed to the principle of asymmetrical cuts and having offered to make cuts down to 350,000 men, can hardly dismiss Bush's proposal. And once the talking begins, progress is likely. The two sides already agree that NATO and the Warsaw Pact should have equal levels of tanks (20,000), armored personnel carriers (28,000), and artillery pieces (16,500). True, there are sticking points. NATO is proposing that, of those machines, just 3,200 tanks, 6,000 APCs, and 1,700 artillery pieces be Soviet, whereas the Soviets want 4,500 tanks, 7,500 APCs and 4,000 guns. Numerous other matters also need to be worked out, especially over verification and definitions. But it all seems doable. And the result would be an end to what has haunted Western Europe for 40 years—the threat of a surprise conventional attack.

So far as many West Germans are concerned, this is just a good beginning. From their point of view, the centerpiece of the Bush proposal is the assurance that a conventional arms pact—which Bush has made seem a near-term prospect—will be followed by negotiations on short-range nuclear weapons based on German soil. Such negotiations promise no real security dividends; the bilateral elimination of short-range nukes doesn't make war less likely, and probably makes it marginally more likely. But the margin isn't large enough to break up NATO over, and West Germany shows no signs of warming to the role of host country for tactical nuclear exchanges. So negotiate we must.

Even if negotiations result in the elimination of all short-range nukes (which NATO now says won't happen), the allies can remain secure in their deterrent so long as: conventional balance is indeed achieved; the French and British retain their independent nuclear arsenals; and NATO's air-based and submarine-based nuclear forces remain strong. The Soviet insistence that we withdraw substantial numbers of deep-strike, nuclear-capable fighter bombers—one of the remaining sticking points in arms talks—should be resisted steadfastly. (And future strategic arms talks should be used to enhance deterrence, by, say, eliminating land-based multiple-warhead missiles—Soviet SS-18s and SS-24s, and U.S. MXs—in favor of single-warhead mobile missiles.)

What's the need for nuclear weapons if peace is breaking out all over? What, indeed, is the need for NATO? Like Reagan at Reykjavik, some Westerners are letting their dreams outrun reality, and asking such questions. Even under proposals for conventional parity in Europe, the Soviets will have a huge military machine that could be mobilized within weeks or months in the event of revived tensions. It's unlikely that Gorbachev would do this anytime soon, given his desire to demilitarize and modernize his economy, but a successor might. Why? Perhaps, if Gorbachev succeeds, to fulfill Russian imperial ambitions. Perhaps, if he fails, to keep the Soviet empire from crumbling.

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There is another reason, as well, to keep NATO strong and unified; it can be an instrument for reshaping the increasingly malleable world. Now that Bush is getting used to the idea of using his imagination, he ought to move beyond the conventional and to make new proposals on the political reorganization of Europe. He has argued, rhetorically, for an end to the East-West division of Europe. He ought to be making specific proposals to bring that about, including full Soviet troop withdrawals from some Eastern European countries in return for deeper cuts in U.S. military forces in Europe. More broadly, he should decide how he wants the world to look ten, twenty years down the road, and use NATO to help get it there. The first prerequisite for that—keeping NATO together without making compromises that render it impotent—has been served well by his latest performance.

REGRETS ONLY

In the slow, ambiguous, cunning world of diplomacy, official words are official deeds. The reception and the reputation of an important pronouncement by a high official are as much political facts as the pronouncement itself. When the secretary of state makes a speech, therefore, there will almost always ensue a war over its meaning; and to the winner of that war goes the immediate advantage in the diplomatic environment.

A war is taking place over the meaning of James Baker's words to the AIPAC convention in Washington a few weeks ago. Baker's speech, we thought, was fair. It was blunt about the extreme positions of both the dominant faction in the Israeli government and the Palestinians. To the Israelis, Baker said: "Lay aside, once and for all, the unrealistic vision of a Greater Israel. . . . Forswear annexation. . . . Stop settlement activity. . . . Reach out to the Palestinians as neighbors who deserve political rights." To the Palestinians, Baker said: "Speak with one voice for peace. . . . Practice constructive diplomacy, not attempts to distort international organizations. . . . Amend the covenant. . . . Translate the dialogue of violence in the *intifada* into a dialogue of politics and diplomacy. . . . Reach out to Israelis and convince them of your peaceful intentions. . . . Understand that no one is going to deliver Israel to you."

The secretary, moreover, heartily endorsed Yitzhak Shamir's proposal for elections in the occupied territories, and ruled out American support for a Palestinian state. But there has been everywhere an attempt—by supporters of the PLO, supporters of Israel, the media—to paint the secretary's speech in lurid anti-Israeli colors, to count it as a victory for the kind of "even-handedness" that amounts, in the real world, to a slackening of American support for Israel. A spokesman for the PLO observed that "it was a big step forward for Mr. Baker to say these things to the Israelis. . ." A member of Egypt's delegation to last week's summit in Casablanca congratulated the United States for its "outspoken language." In the *New York Times*, an analyst friendly to the PLO position hailed the speech as "a major departure," and wondered whether it should be followed by cuts in American aid to Israel ("that portion of the aid devoted to repressing Palestinians," whatever that means). "A RETREAT FROM REAGAN-ERA CLOSENESS" was the *Times*' headline for its review of the controversy. And it certainly did not help that Shamir derided the speech as "useless," that the head of AIPAC frowned on it, that pro-Israeli columnists (but this time, not all of them) worried about what seemed to be a new American neutrality.

Baker set out to tell it like it is, and in truth he did little more than put long-standing American positions into short, punchy sentences; but he seems to have made a little present to the enemies of Israel. This might have been avoided had the administration been as blunt about the reasons for America's time-honored and extraordinary alliance with Israel as about the reasons for its disagreement with the present head of Israel's government. The tone matters. Nobody is asking that Israel be coddled. But many people are asking that Israel make concessions, and those concessions will not, must not, be made unless the moral, strategic, and political fundamentals of America's friendship seem intact and vital. Israel's sensitivities are no minor element in the solution of this draining, dragging conflict.

Presumably Baker was making a small gamble: to exchange a bit of Israeli confidence in him for a bit of Arab confidence. Perhaps he expected a quick result—a new expression of Arab interest in Shamir's election idea—at the Arab summit in Casablanca. If so, he was disappointed. And he might draw a lesson from this result. The rough rhetoric about Israel produced no softer rhetoric from the PLO; and no action. The PLO spokesman who praised the speech proceeded only to condemn it for not going far enough. Baker may have it backward: rough rhetoric about Israel seems only to harden all sides. It hardens the Israelis, who feel understandably defensive, and it hardens the PLO, who feel that their work will be done for them in Washington. As George Shultz understood, what makes both parties more forthcoming is, rather, the candid reiteration of American support for Israel: the Israelis become less worried about abandonment and isolation, the Palestinians become more alive to the requirements of realism.

If the Palestinians and their supporters will dwell only on Baker's blunt talk to the Israelis, they will be coddling themselves, which they have been known to do before. They had better re-read the secretary's speech closely. It is strewn with gauntlets hurled before them. Will they pick any of them up? Will they go to elections? Will they understand that peace will not take the form of Israeli surrender? Arafat has, two or three times, uttered the magic words about the recognition of Israel; but Israelis may be forgiven for not believing in magic. And it is Israel, not America, that holds the happiness and the unhappiness of the Palestinians in its hands. •

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THE TONI AWARD

"Somebody has to take responsibility for being a leader," Toni Morrison says, commenting on America's continuing racial troubles in a recent interview in *Time*. Let's hope Morrison herself isn't anybody's idea of that somebody. Impatient with what she calls "comic-book solutions to really major problems," she delivers a message that can only be described as hostile to progress for American blacks.

Racism is her familiar refrain; Morrison constantly invokes—as she herself puts it—"this wonderful 'they' we always blame for anything." But her novel, and breathtakingly irresponsible, contribution to the debate is her romanticization of the victims. She simply denies that two of the really major problems—teenage pregnancy and the high school dropout rate—are problems at all. Her wisdom on the latter: "Schools must stop being holding pens to keep energetic young people off the job market and off the streets. They are real threats because they may know more, they may have more energy, and they may take your job. So we stretch puberty out a long, long time." On the former: "The child's not going to hurt [the teenage mother]. Of course, it is absolutely time consuming. But who cares about the schedule? What is this business that you have to finish school at 18? . . . The body is ready to have babies, that's why they are in a passion to do it. Nature wants it done then, when the body can handle it, not after 40, when the income can handle it."

This is a profoundly oppressive message: there's no reason to worry about black teenagers who are ill-educated and black teenage girls who are quickly burdened with babies. Uttered by anyone who wasn't black, it would immediately be seen, and denounced, for what it is. This kind of nutty anti-bourgeois rhetoric is cruel and condescending—as if the poor and those in the underclass should have no hope of, or interest in, a life with choices. But Morrison blithely denies the dismal consequences of teenage childbearing. (Among other hardships, teen mothers earn on average half as much as women who wait until they're 20 to have children.) Her reach-for-the-stars exhortations are equally unrealistic—to say nothing of her cure-all program: the Toni Morrison baby-sitting service. "They can be teachers. They can be brain surgeons. We have to help them become brain surgeons. That's my job. I want to take them all in my arms and say, 'Your baby is beautiful and so are you and, honey, you can do it. And when you want to be a brain surgeon, call me—I will take care of your baby.' "

The lifting of the long taboo on talking about the black family crisis was a welcome and important turning point half a decade ago. The statistics were sobering, and have not improved: currently close to half of all black families are headed by women without husbands, more than half of all black babies are born out of

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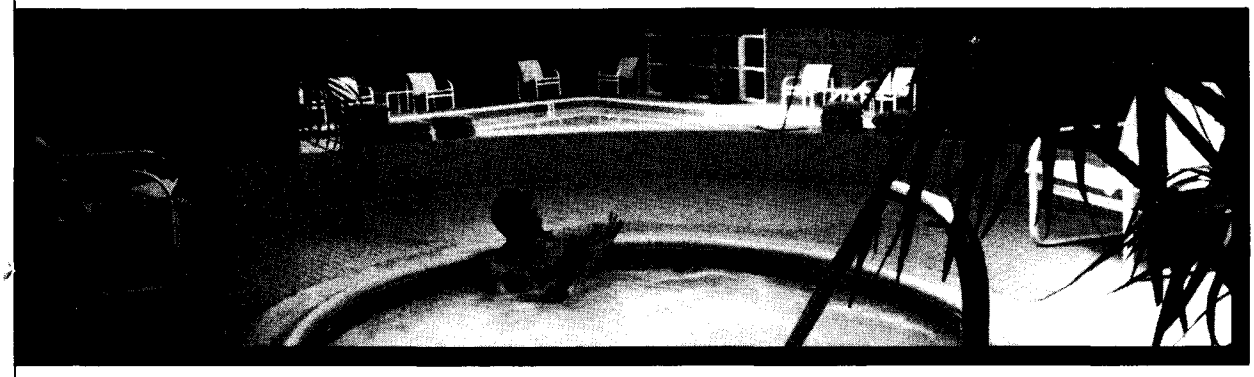

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wedlock, one in four to a teenage mother, typically an unmarried one. The rise of female-headed households has ensured the passing of poverty down the generations. Toni Morrison's performance reminds us that there *is* something worse than silence about the crisis of the family. To celebrate that crisis in the name of Nature is to cheat black kids of the possibilities of nurture. A symbolic hug from Toni Morrison isn't much to build a life on.

NOTEBOOK

TALES OF ONE CITY, I:

No improvement cited in Marcos' condition

—*Boston Globe*, May 22

Marcos shows improvement

—*Boston Herald*, same day

TALES OF ONE CITY, II:

SWALLOWING A bitter pill, Gov. Michael Dukakis yesterday welcomed to Boston the man who beat him for the presidency, and was booed as he joined President Bush at Boston University's commencement ceremonies.

Dukakis also received vigorous applause, especially from students, when his name was announced.

—*Boston Herald*, May 22 —*Boston Globe*, same day

(both thanks to Matthew W. Costello, Cambridge, Massachusetts)

The wrong man for the rights job.

TOKEN ENFORCER

By Fred Barnes

In the scheme of things, it was only a small surprise. As President Bush toured the Far East, Attorney General Richard Thornburgh announced in Washington on February 24 that he was recommending William Lucas, a black Democrat-turned-Republican from Detroit, as assistant attorney general for civil rights. This was news to nearly everyone at the White House. And since Bush and his aides don't like surprises, they were ticked. Chase Untermeyer, the White House personnel chief, "yelled at me," says Murray Dickman, Thornburgh's lieutenant for personnel and administration. "Bob Estrada [Untermeyer's assistant] yelled at me. I can't remember whether John Sununu yelled at me or not."

Thornburgh made the worst out of a touchy situation by going public. He figured that because his recommendation of Lucas had already leaked—even a reporter traveling with Bush in the Orient had gotten wind of it—he might as well make it official. Trouble was, the White House then took two months to act on Thornburgh's advice. In the meantime, critical stories about Lucas appeared, targeting his minimal experience as a lawyer, a mini-scandal or two in his past, and a slightly puffed-up résumé. Worse, opposition by an important segment of the civil rights movement congealed. "Lucas paid a price for overenthusiasm at Justice," says a senior White House aide.

The White House—Untermeyer, to be exact—had urged Thornburgh to consider Lucas for a job. "He was in the pool of people who were going to get something," says a Bush aide. Lee Atwater, the Republican national chairman, is a Lucas fan, which didn't hurt. He put Lucas on a list of blacks who should be hired. Lucas had also been an early Bush supporter in 1988, an important credential. Untermeyer thought Lucas would make a fine chief U.S. marshal. Or maybe Lucas could head the Customs Service. Or perhaps he'd fit as drug czar Bill Bennett's deputy. "There were three or four things," says a White House official. "It wasn't as if we pinned him into a job."

Thornburgh and Dickman did that. They believe the civil rights job was forever changed by Brad Reynolds, the conservative who held it for eight years under President Reagan. "I'd interviewed 20 people who were interested in the job," says Dickman. "Most of them were good white, male, Republican lawyers with good civil rights backgrounds." But he thought they were wrong for the job. Post-Reynolds, the job "is more visible. It's a public position with a public platform." I half-expected Dickman to say that a public spokesman for civil rights enforcement is what he and Thornburgh have in mind. He stopped short of that. But he scarcely bothered to defend Lucas's credentials as a lawyer. "We don't accept the notion you have to be the best civil rights lawyer in the world to be the head of the civil rights division."

Lucas isn't. He served briefly in 1962 and 1963 as an investigator in the civil rights division, quitting after he flunked the bar exam and wasn't eligible to become a lawyer there. Since he stepped down as Wayne County executive in Michigan in 1986, he's worked for a Detroit law firm. But not much. Last year he was paid $25,000 by the firm, and $65,000 for work he did for the Republican National Committee. His inexperience as a litigator prompted a few Republicans, black and white, to lobby quietly against his nomination. This caused a backlash. Conservative activists leaned on Thornburgh, Sununu, and Untermeyer to make sure Bush followed through on the nomination. On April 25, in a perfunctory press release, the White House noted Bush's intention to nominate Lucas.

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The nomination has wreaked havoc in the civil rights community. "For us, the assistant attorney general for civil rights is the most important position in the executive branch," says Ralph Neas, executive director of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights. "It's not a position for on-the-job training." Neas, Benjamin Hooks of the NAACP, and others met with Lucas to assess his legal skill. They were unimpressed. Members of the Congressional Black Caucus conferred with Lucas and were alarmed at his fuzzy knowledge of an important Supreme Court ruling that limits minority set-asides. Oddly enough, another critic of Lucas is conservative legal scholar Bruce Fein. He says Lucas isn't capable of defending the "colorblind, gender-blind jurisprudence" pioneered by the Reagan Justice Department.

The Leadership Conference on May 9 voted to oppose the nomination. Hours after that was announced, Lucas bravely showed up at the organization's annual dinner in Washington. The next day the conference issued a statement saying Lucas "may well be qualified for other important positions in the federal government, but he does not have the experience, the substantive knowledge of the increasingly technical field of civil rights, or the litigation skills to carry out the duties of the civil rights office effectively." At the Justice Department, Dickman dismisses this opposition as "Ralph Neas's spring project." But the Leadership Conference doesn't throw its opposition around lightly. It opposed only three non-judicial nominees (Ed Meese as attorney general, Reynolds as deputy attorney general, and an obscure fellow picked for general counsel of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission) in the Reagan years. It defeated two of them. Neas, of course, spearheaded the lobbying effort that blocked the confirmation of Robert Bork for the Supreme Court.

Lucas is not isolated from the civil rights movement the way Bork was. He has supporters. On May 2, Thornburgh recruited an important one. He met with Jesse Jackson to talk about discrimination against sugar cane workers. "I hope you can support Bill Lucas," Thornburgh interjected. Jackson said he likes Lucas, but suggested that someone with more legal experience should have been chosen. Still, he told Thornburgh he'd back Lucas. Lucas himself lined up Democratic Representative John Conyers of Michigan, who is black. When Lucas switched parties in 1985 and ran for governor as a Republican, Conyers likened him to "some Jews who led their brothers and sisters into the ovens of the Holocaust." After talking to Lucas, Conyers said he's persuaded Lucas is "committed to civil rights enforcement and affirmative action."

Chances are the complaints of Neas, Hooks, and other civil rights leader won't defeat Lucas. As of early June no Democrats on the Senate Judiciary Committee had voiced opposition to Lucas, and one, Dennis DeConcini of Arizona, wrote Thornburgh in support of the nomination. Lucas and DeConcini served together on the Bicentennial Commission. Six of the seven Republicans on the committee are pledged to Lucas. The seventh, Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania, is undecided. So long as Lucas doesn't blunder badly when he testifies before the committee, probably in late June, he should pass the civil rights test.

But there's another test for nominees in 1989—ethics. And Lucas has several trouble spots. The fact that a résumé once called him a civil rights "attorney" at Justice isn't serious. Nor is the matter of his having taken some trips to Las Vegas in 1975 that were arranged by a man with mob connections. That's ancient history. Rather, Judiciary Committee investigators are concentrating on contracts Lucas awarded as Wayne County executive. A $138 million contract to renovate a county office building went to a development group headed by Lucas's chief fund-raiser. And Lucas knew his chief of staff held a 15 percent interest in a construction firm set to work on the project. Then last year Lucas got $15,000 from a businessman and $10,000 from a lawyer who had benefited earlier from a contract he awarded. Lucas has been exonerated before on questions about contracts, and he passed the pre-nomination check by the FBI. But now he's got to defend himself forcefully in front of the committee. If he does, he's in. If he doesn't, Thornburgh may regret having nominated him, early or ever.

How Mao led China astray.

THE WRONG MARCH

By Simon Leys

The recent events in Peking call irresistibly to mind Bertolt Brecht's famous epigram: "The people have lost the confidence of the Government; the Government has decided to dissolve the people, and to appoint another one."

Whatever may be the immediate outcome of the demonstrations—and I fear it will be grim—one thing is already certain: May 1989 will remain as one of the most momentous periods in the history of 20th-century China, and as a landmark in the Long March of mankind toward democracy and away from totalitarianism.

The demonstrations may have appeared confused, vague, and muddled in some respects—this was an inevitable price for their spontaneity. Nevertheless, they have achieved one gigantic and decisive result: they exploded once and for all the fiction that was summarized in the very name "People's Republic" of China. Following the Orwellian convention that generally requires that cannibal kings be called "Wise

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Leaders," that gangs of thugs be known as "Liberation Fronts," and that every murderous despotism should always carry the title of "Democratic Republic," the Chinese Communist regime used to affix "People's" labels upon virtually every institution and organ of the state, as if better to indicate that the *real* people were to be effectively evacuated from the entire political system. With all other avenues of expression barred to them, in a spontaneous move, they finally gathered in the open, under the sky, on Tiananmen Square, and there they showed to the world that the Communist government, having alienated the whole nation, is now willing to declare war on its own citizens.

The location they chose has a rich historical significance. Virtually on the same spot, 70 years ago (May 4, 1919), modern China was truly born, with a demonstration of students denouncing an oppressive and corrupt government, and demanding democracy and modernization. Ever since, the spirit of the May Fourth Movement has remained an inspiration for all that is young and alive in China. The quest for democracy is the essential threat that pervades the entire history of China in our century; even Mao Zedong, in order to secure national support before grabbing power, had to masquerade as a democrat in the May Fourth tradition. The Maoist promise was promptly and cruelly betrayed, but the dream always remained fiercely alive—witness the demonstrations of April 5, 1976, on Tiananmen, denouncing Mao's tyranny shortly before his death, and the heroic "Peking Spring" of 1979, with its "Democracy Wall" and its martyrs (Wei Jingsheng and many others who were swallowed into the Chinese Gulag, never to be heard of again).

Forty years ago, the Maoist regime destroyed the old heart of Peking to make room for a huge, flat desert of bitumen in front of the Imperial Palace. The idea was to create a gigantic stage that could accommodate the state liturgies and ritual ceremonies in which the masses are mobilized to celebrate the cult of the Supreme Leader. Now, by an ironic paradox, the very space that had been planned for the ultimate atomization of the hapless subjects and for the greatest glory of the Despot is being used in a way that defeats magnificently its original purpose. Never before was direct democracy afforded an opportunity to be displayed on such a scale.

That a crowd of one million could gather spontaneously and peacefully for so long, and could demonstrate with so much restraint, is nothing short of miraculous. By contrast, the incapacity of the government to handle what were essentially sensible and moderate requests (to fight corruption, to implement some basic constitutional rights—freedom of speech and freedom of the press—and simply to enter into a dialogue with the demonstrators) appears all the more brutally obtuse. As history has repeatedly shown, what a revolution requires in order to succeed is not necessarily great intelligence on the revolutionary side, but sufficient stupidity on the side of the government. In this respect, the Communist leaders have ensured the victory of ten revolutions—they have sealed their fate. Yet how could one have expected anything else from notorious Stalinist bureaucrats such as Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng? For them, "the masses" have always been, by very definition, mute and monotonous lines of supernumeraries and walk-ons that can be moved and shifted from one corner of the stage to the other, as a sort of human backdrop, at the whims of the commissars. That "the masses" should now speak on their own initiative is more than shocking and scandalous—it is downright aberrant. How would a ventriloquist feel, should his dummy suddenly address him?

An eminent Polish intellectual observed some time ago that the worst nightmare of all Communist leaders is that, one day, the Western world might come to perceive—however dimly—the extraordinary hollowness and fragility of these monolithic repressive regimes. Actually, I don't think they need ever have such nightmares; not that their bankrupt systems are not fragile—their brittleness is extreme—but simply that whenever their utter vulnerability is exposed to us, in all its nakedness, we modestly avert our eyes to spare them any embarrassment. Many of our democratic statesmen, instead of being touched by the Chinese people's ardent plea for democracy, seem mostly worried at the idea that a billion people might be cast adrift, free from the rigid safety of their totalitarian fetters.

The Chinese democrats may be on their own, but they are many, and they have made a giant step from which there can be no return. The political transformation, thanks to them, is already much more advanced in China than in the Soviet Union—and this is why Gorbachev's *glasnost* quickly found its limits when it had to report the Chinese demonstrations: such a sight might have given dangerous ideas to the Soviet public. In the Soviet Union, the political reforms are being initiated from the top, and thus they can be called off at any time. In China, the demand comes from the people, and this generates an irrepressible force for change. Shortly after the death of Mao, a leading Soviet dissenter characterized very aptly the Chinese political advance: the great misfortune of the Soviet Union, he said, was that it had won the war, whereas the good fortune of China was that it had lost the Cultural Revolution. Its victory over Nazi Germany vested Stalinist Russia with a self-righteousness and complacency that precluded for a long time any idea of reform and comforted the regime in its worst errors. In China, on the contrary, the horrifying catastrophe of the Cultural Revolution brought irreparable discredit upon the Communist regime; it demonstrated its political and moral bankruptcy, and simultaneously created a new breed of citizen, bold and aggressive—a people whom the leaders would never again be able to coerce into blind obedience.

I am glad I am not a "China Watcher" or a "Pekinologist." To have to speculate on the respective policies and personalities of Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng, or of

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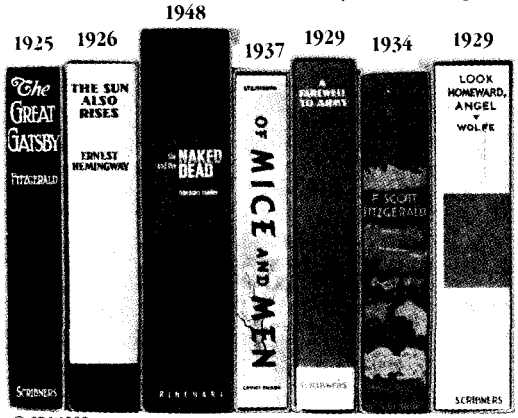

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Hu Yaobang (*requiescat in pace*) and Zhao Ziyang, seems a singularly vacuous and sterile exercise. Merely two points should be noted: (1) The hatred for the government is such that, in the eyes of the people, whoever is in disgrace must be a hero, and whoever is in power must be a scoundrel (which naturally entails the possibility for the same person to be successively a scoundrel, a hero, and then a scoundrel again, following the vicissitudes of his political career). (2) The immediate outcome of the struggle between the Party leaders and the people can only benefit the military, and more specially, the security organs.

The latter development, needless to say, would be ominous. In the long term, however, it will also prove utterly ineffectual and irrelevant. A police state cannot anymore hope to tackle the real issue of China; it will merely ensure that the next—and unavoidable—explosion of popular discontent will be violent.

The heart of the crisis, I believe, is that the Chinese Communist regime is actually dead—and has been dead for several years already. Yet it might still take a while before it is finally buried. When Qin Shihuang, the founder of the first Chinese empire, died during a voyage in the provinces in 210 B.C., the members of his entourage were so afraid that the empire might immediately disintegrate that they did not dare to disclose the news of his death. Business was carried on as usual; but as it was summer, they loaded a cargo of rotting fish in the imperial chariot, to cover up the smell of decaying body.

What amount of smelly luggage will be needed now to enable Chinese communism to continue much further on its aimless journey?

SIMON LEYS is the author of *The Burning Forest* (New

The U.S.-Japan co-technology sphere.

LET'S MAKE A DEAL

By Steven K. Vogel

During the recent debate over the U.S.-Japan agreement to jointly build Japan's "FSX" fighter plane, a number of congressmen complained that the United States had once again been had. The Japanese, they argued, would just take American technology and use it to crack one of the last bastions of U.S. competitive strength: the civilian aircraft industry. A resolution of disapproval of the FSX agreement was barely rejected in a Senate vote last month, and the feeling persists that the United States has cashed in its bargaining chips and received little in return.

These critics of the FSX deal, though, are flattering themselves. Whatever technological secrets the Japanese might be able to glean from the deal—and there won't be many—are outweighed by what we stand to gain in return. What's really significant about the FSX agreement is that, for the first time ever, the Japanese government agreed to allow Japanese technology used in a joint project to "flow back" to the United States. In this case, the technology may or may not significantly benefit the U.S. military, but that isn't the point. The flow-back provision sets a crucial precedent. A sustained exchange of U.S.-Japan military technology would benefit both us *and* the Japanese—probably us more than them. It would guarantee the two nations international pre-eminence in military technology, nourish their bilateral security relations, and insulate them against the geopolitical uncertainties of the coming decades.

As things now stand, Japan has the potential to play a pivotal role in the military technology race between the United States and the Soviet Union. On the one hand, Japanese firms could quickly undermine the U.S. technological lead over the Soviet Union in specific areas. Most experts now concede that Toshiba Machine's sale of advanced milling machines to the Soviet Union did not significantly enhance the Soviets' ability to silence their submarines, but this doesn't mean that a similar sale in the future couldn't be much more damaging. And certainly the Japanese have much to contribute to the Soviet technological base. On the other hand, the combination of U.S. strength in basic research with Japanese prowess in applied research, and U.S. technological sophistication with Japanese reliability, could help the United States achieve permanent superiority over the Soviet Union—and over every other nation, for that matter—in most areas of military technology.

Those who belittle the significance of the Japan-to-U.S. technological flow by pointing to the apparent dearth of Japanese-made military hardware underestimate the military applicability of Japanese commercial technology. Most military systems now draw heavily on electronics, Japan's area of greatest technological strength. Japan's off-the-shelf commercial electronic components are now often more advanced and more reliable than those made specifically for military applications. "Thanks to the 'electronics-ization' of defense," boasts Takeshi Abe, managing director of Mitsubishi Electric, "the stage is finally set for Japan to build weapons even better than those made in the USA." He's not kidding. In addition, Japan excels in making advanced industrial ceramics, which are used to coat aircraft engines and to hermetically insulate missile guidance systems and warheads. General Dynamics is particularly interested in Japan's lightweight carbon composite materials for use in aircraft wings.

The U.S. Department of Defense has not been blind to the potential for the military use of Japanese technology. In 1983 the United States and Japan established a

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Joint Military Technology Commission to explore the transfer of Japanese military-use technology to the United States. And in 1988 the Japanese government proposed that the United States and Japan work together on research and development in five areas: anti-armor technology; degaussing (erasure of magnetic signature) techniques for submarines; missile seekers; ducted rocket engines; and laser-jamming technology. The two sides eventually decided to drop the last area, but the United States is likely to cooperate in two or three of the others. One American executive from a major defense contractor has pointed out that the United States is likely to need Japanese assistance in funding the biggest future military R&D programs, such as developing a new medium-range surface-to-air missile.

U.S.-Japan military technology cooperation may be even more important in its less obvious role: preventing the Japanese defense industry from emerging as a serious competitor. The FSX deal is a case in point. Some U.S. critics simply brushed off Tokyo's threat to develop the plane indigenously as some sort of tactical bluff. In doing so, they utterly misunderstood the dynamics of Japan's internal defense debate. A consortium of Japanese producers led by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries had been working for years to build the political support and the technological base needed to develop the FSX without American help. By the summer of 1987, the consortium had won support from within the Japan Defense Agency (JDA), the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), and the ruling Liberal Democratic Party.

The JDA might have gone ahead with a homegrown product had it not been for the Toshiba Machine scandal. The sale of technology to the Soviet Union put Japan in such an embarrassing situation—particularly in terms of its credibility as a producer of sensitive military hardware—that it could no longer resist the U.S. pressure to pay for American technology rather than rely on its own. Nonetheless, the Japanese would only consent to co-develop the plane, not to import it.

Japanese aircraft manufacturers fought hard for indigenous development because they were convinced that they would learn more by developing the plane on their own than by importing U.S. technology. Their weaknesses lie not so much in components or even subsystems, but in the ability to integrate those components and subsystems into a coherent large-scale system. U.S. contractors insist that the Japanese could never have built a world-class fighter by themselves, and the Japanese would be the first to admit they're right. Sakichiro Ono, former executive director of the Japanese Ordnance Association, says, "We would really like to catch up with the generation after the FSX." Now the Japanese will do their best to gain the same sort of experience within the co-development framework, but they will be powerfully constrained by their dependence on American partners.

The Japanese ability to close the technology gap in the long term should not be underestimated. At the subsystem level, the Japanese are well behind in aircraft engines, but they are fairly advanced in avionics and radar. Mitsubishi Electric reportedly has developed an active phased array radar for fighter aircraft that has unprecedented terrain-mapping capabilities. Japanese manufacturers have already had some success with smaller weapon systems, particularly in developing an air-to-surface missile, the ASM-1, within a relatively modest R&D budget. The Mitsubishi Heavy Industries' surface-to-surface missile, the SSM-1, reportedly startled American observers with an exceptional hit rate during tests in California last year. And the JDA's R&D wing, the Technical Research and Development Institute, has kept the Japanese defense industry close to the world standard in more complex systems such as tanks and trainer aircraft.

The vaunted Japanese edge in "reliability" already extends into the military sector. The Westinghouse APQ 120 radar for the F-4 fighter reportedly lasts an average of eight hours before failure, whereas the Mitsubishi Electric equivalent lasts an average of 40 hours. Japanese producers may eventually be capable of using flexible manufacturing systems to bring the low costs of mass production to the small-batch production characteristic of the defense industry. In that case, the U.S. producers might still have the state-of-the-art technology, but the Japanese would be the low-cost leaders in the arms business.

The greatest barriers for the Japanese defense industry, though, are not technological but political. Although there have been some transfers of technology to the United States, Japanese defense manufacturers are still constrained by a ban on the export of military systems. Moreover, in order to compete in the global arms business, Japanese producers will need the full-fledged financial backing of the government over an extended period of time.

Whether the government decides to provide that kind of support depends on the course of U.S.-Japan relations. Japan's military technology policy, like its defense policy generally, is more sensitive to changes in that bilateral relationship than to changes in real or perceived military threats to Japan. Hence the importance of the FSX deal. If Japanese defense contractors feel they cannot count on transfers of advanced U.S. technology, they will develop their own. And if Japanese government officials feel they cannot rely on U.S. military protection, they will seek greater independence in defense policy. For its part, the United States increasingly needs Japan's help to develop new weapons systems. By providing a means of reassuring the Japanese and gaining U.S. access to Japan's technology at the same time, the deal to co-develop the FSX is the first in a series of ventures that promises to secure the best of both worlds.

STEVEN K. VOGEL is a research fellow at the Berkeley Roundtable on the International Economy.

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America's dismal demographic future.

FUTURE SHOCK

By David E. Bloom and Neil G. Bennett

In 1987 Louis Harris, the pollster, blitzed the media with a startling forecast: in the future only one in eight marriages would break up, rather than the one in two that most previous projections had anticipated. This was a heartening prediction, and one that accorded nicely with Harris's own values, but it was not without flaws. Harris apparently had noted that 12.4 percent of women aged 15-44 were divorced—which, indeed, amounts to about one in eight. But a critical distinction seems to have escaped his attention—between the number of divorced women at any given point in time and the number of women who will be divorced at some point in their lives. Naturally, the latter is larger, since women who are now married may later get divorced.

When Harris's prediction was challenged, he pointed for support to the fact that only about two percent of married couples break up each year. But a simple calculation shows that if a group of women marry at age 25 and face a two percent chance of divorce annually, more than half will be divorced by age 60. Harris might have declared the 100 percent death rate to be a myth had he noticed that less than one percent of our population dies each year.

This episode points to a persistent peril of demographic forecasting: drawing plainly ill-founded inferences. Unfortunately, there are many other perils, and most of them are harder to guard against. Unexpected trends or events—a Supreme Court rollback of *Roe* v. *Wade*; the mass entry, as during the past two decades, of women into the work force; the AIDS epidemic—can undermine key demographic assumptions about birth, life, or death.

These pitfalls notwithstanding, demography does have a certain basic predictive power. To begin with, there is the "iron law of demography," the sometimes painful acknowledgment that everyone's age increases by one with the passage of each year. Thus, the number of 30-year-olds in the United States ten years from now will equal the number of 20-year-olds this year, adjusted downward for the small and fairly predictable number who may be expected to die or migrate abroad (minus any immigrants). This simple knowledge can be powerful when combined with a few less iron laws of demographics. For example, young populations tend to have lower voter turnout rates than elderly populations, while elderly populations require more hospitals and make more claims on social health insurance systems. Though not set in stone, such patterns tend to be stable over time, so anticipating the sheer size of successive generations can shed light on the future.

A second source of demographic projections is differing birthrates among various socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic groups. When these groups have different statistical characteristics, one can make projections based on the changing composition of the population. For example, males born into poverty are more likely to commit crimes as teenagers and adults than are more privileged males. So a boom in births among poor mothers can be expected to exert upward pressure on the crime rate 15 to 20 years later. Because of the slipperiness of a key assumption in such projections—that the aggregate traits of a given group will not change dramatically between generations—they are loaded with uncertainty. Still, they have their uses.

To the extent that current demographic trends prove decisive, the nation's future can be said to hinge, loosely speaking, on the interaction between—indeed, the struggle between—the two basic forces just outlined: between changes in the *size* of successive generations, and changes in the *composition* of successive generations. Specifically, the changing socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic composition of America's younger generations is likely to raise challenges that, unless met, could undermine not only the productivity of the nation, but the ideals that have long characterized it. But the changing size of successive generations—in particular the tailing out of the baby boom—has the potential to meet those challenges, and to help policy-makers meet them.

Demographic alarms tend to come from the right. Two years ago, in *The Birth Dearth*, conservative Ben Wattenberg warned that as American and Western European women postponed marriage and childbearing, and women behind the Iron Curtain didn't . . . well, you can guess the rest. But it turns out that fears of an American birth dearth are largely unfounded. More babies were born in the United States in 1988 than in any year since the end of the baby boom. And the Census Bureau

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now projects that even if American women continue to reproduce at their present modest rate, the population won't start to decline for over half a century.

This raises the question of what has gotten conservatives so worked up about birthrates. One answer is that their real worry is not the aggregate number of American babies, but the relatively large and growing proportion of babies that are not white. Non-whites make up 20 percent of newborns, up from 15 percent in 1960, and higher than the 15.6 percent of the population that non-whites now constitute. The Census Bureau projects that the fraction of non-whites in the population will grow to 25 percent over the next 65 years.

There are some real issues here, although skin color is certainly not foremost among them. Over half of all black babies were born outside of marriage in 1986, more than three times the rate for whites. Starting out in life with a single parent generally disadvantages children not just emotionally but economically; more than half of children who live with just their mothers are in poverty, over five times the rate for children who live with a married couple. This is one reason non-white babies, while representing one in five of all babies, have double that representation among families with incomes below $10,000, and half that representation among families with incomes above $35,000. And poverty, of course, often brings cultural circumstances—uneducated parents, for example—that load the dice against a highly productive life.

The dismal circumstances under which many minority babies are born partly reflects the fact that minorities, more than whites, tend to live in such circumstances. But it also reflects the fact that lower-income minorities have more children than higher-income minorities. This inverse correlation is seen among whites too, but it is stronger among minorities. Poor white women are 62 percent more likely to have a child than affluent white women (household income over $35,000), compared to a 100 percent differential for black women.

All told, the primary sense in which the race of newborns is a legitimate concern is that skin color is, statistically speaking, a proxy for the quality of the socioeconomic environment in which they will develop. But, by the same token, it is largely redundant to talk about skin color; if you know the income level of an infant's family, the education level of its parents, and whether its mother is married, you can predict its economic status as an adult reasonably well. To be sure, knowing its race adds further predictive power, and it is not hard to imagine why. Some disadvantages seem particularly to afflict poor children who are black. Even aside from discrimination, there is the underclass culture, about which so much has now been written. The constellation of attitudes, role models, and vices surrounding a black child in Harlem is probably more pernicious than that faced by an equally poor white child in Appalachia.

Still, more often than not, worries about the changing composition of the American population are couched not in racial terms, but in the largely overlapping terms of socioeconomic class. Richard J. Herrnstein of Harvard University recently expressed the concern that the relatively low birthrates of middle- and upper-class women in the United States will lead to a decline in the share of the population with high IQs. Herrnstein is particularly worried about the adverse implications of these changes for worker productivity. He rests his case on the twin pillars of a positive "correlation between social status and . . . intelligence" and on his belief that an individual's potential productivity has a strong genetic component. (Herrnstein is not talking about a genetic basis for differences among racial and ethnic groups—which he has been unfairly accused of doing—although other commentators have discussed the issue in these terms.)

If one accepts Herrnstein's emphasis on the genes, one is led naturally to consider a range of pronatalist policies, focused on making it easier for "bright women" to have children. Policies designed to reduce the fertility of less intelligent women, or poor women, would be another implication of his analysis, although he does not make such proposals. And, of course, one *can* contemplate such policies even if one assumes that the behavioral components of economic productivity—whether "intelligence," industriousness, charm, whatever—are environmentally, not genetically, based; after all, if a poor mother doesn't have a child, she can't instill any of the habits that led to her own poverty. But the far more important point is the *difference* between emphasizing genetic and environmental factors: to the extent that the environment is responsible for individual differences, changing fertility rates isn't the *only* policy response to the problem. Instead, the environments of children can be improved or compensated for by a wide range of policies.

Policies that could steer poor children toward a productive life include increased federal and state investment in public schools, so that children of varying backgrounds can receive educations of uniformly high quality; better enforcement of anti-discrimination measures that remove arbitrary barriers to success; mechanisms that better ensure the flow of financial support to children from absent fathers; and public support for an expanded child-care system that will enable low-income single parents to seek education, training, and jobs. Any of these might help avert the fate that otherwise seems likely to result from the inverse correlation between socioeconomic class and fertility: an excess of low-skill and, worse yet, *unemployed* low-skill workers, many of whom are mired in poverty and removed from traditional American notions about the role of work in personal fulfillment.

Among the (usually unspoken) fears about a high birthrate among blacks and Hispanics is the assumption that minorities commit a disproportionate number of crimes. And they do—as do lower-income whites. But the larger demographic picture suggests a compensating trend. Even though a growing fraction of males in the crime-prone years are minorities and low income, the total number of males in those years is dropping.

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The baby boom has already passed out of the mid-to-late teens, the peak ages for committing criminal acts; in another few years, it will have left the mid-to-late 20s, the peak ages for arrest and incarceration. If the rates at which individuals in different age groups are arrested remain stable, the total number of arrests will barely increase through the turn of the century, and will actually decline by about ten percent on a per capita basis. (You can count on politicians and law enforcement officials to claim credit for this.) News of violent crimes from Washington, D.C., and New York City are a sobering reminder of the limits of such demographic projections; arrest rates could increase in tandem with other trends such as the growing use of crack. Still, demographic forces can be expected to exert downward pressure on the demand for prisons and law enforcement resources. And to the extent that low-income blacks, Hispanics, and whites can be integrated into the economic mainstream, their statistical tendency toward crime can be expected to evaporate.

The great demographic hope for the future, as we've said, lies in the tension between two fundamental population trends. Specifically, the hope is that some of the more alarming implications of the changing *composition* of future generations will be neutralized by the shrinking *size* of successive generations. This is not meant in the obvious sense: that the absolute numbers of poor children will grow less dramatically as successive generations shrink. Rather, the hope is a subtler one: that although generations that reach working age will consist increasingly of people born in poor and lower-income families, the general shortage of workers their age will yank them into the mainstream economy.

During the 1970s the U.S. civilian labor force grew at an annual rate of 2.6 percent. The baby boom was principally responsible; the increased labor force participation of women, although now decelerating, was also important. But the children of the baby boom had reached working age by the early 1980s, and in the future most new entrants to the labor force will be drawn from a substantially smaller pool; the labor force should grow at only slightly above one percent per year. That is much slower than the growth to which the economy is accustomed. And we will have to live with it for quite a while, since the baby boom's echo—the babies of the boomers—won't reach working ages in large numbers until the first few years of the next century.

The U.S. labor market has already begun to undergo what will be a wrenching transformation from a buyer's to a seller's market. The help wanted signs in the windows of fast-food outlets are but one indication of changes to come. Others include the decline over the past few years in the unemployment rate and, especially, in the teenage unemployment rate. During the 1990s many employers will find their power to act autocratically in the workplace limited considerably by labor shortages. Wage rates will almost certainly rise. Although the federal minimum wage is the subject of much debate now, it will make little difference whether it is increased in 1991 to $4.25 per hour or $4.55 per hour, since by then employers will have to offer most low-skill workers considerably more.

The big question is: What will employers be getting for their money? New workers will increasingly come from backgrounds not traditionally associated with the most productive skills. Non-Hispanic white men, who now make up 44 percent of the labor force, are expected to contribute only eight of every 100 new workers between now and 2000. Blacks, Hispanics, and non-Hispanic white women—demographic groups that have traditionally had either relatively weak technical or language skills or relatively unstable attachments to work—will provide the other new labor force entrants.

Although the nature of jobs in the United States is evolving in a diverse and complex fashion, the future need for better-educated workers with improved reasoning and mathematical abilities is absolutely clear. Where will these workers come from? According to a recent Department of Education study, fewer than one in three blacks and Hispanics in their early 20s could locate information in an almanac or a news article; fewer than one in eight could correctly determine the change due from the purchase of a two-item restaurant meal; and fewer than one in 20 could decipher a bus schedule. (Although the corresponding figures for whites are higher, they are nothing to brag about.)

The prerequisites for productive work cannot be expected to appear magically in the unemployed or in underclass teenagers as soon as the tight labor market draws them into employment. For that reason—especially in view of the shortage of alternative workers—employers may find it profitable to make remedial investments in workers' skills. If all works out well, the private sector will succeed in equipping the disadvantaged to join the economic mainstream. Many social ills could presumably be alleviated in the process. But this will come at a cost to employers, and no one knows how high it will be. In the more pessimistic scenarios, adequately upgrading workers' skills will prove impossible—or, at least, not worth the price to employers. The gap between rich and poor would then continue to widen, aggravating a wide range of associated tensions.

Although the demographic crystal ball doesn't say which of these scenarios will be more nearly realized, we would do well to note several things: (1) the labor shortage will be an excellent opportunity to try to increase social mobility and break the grip of the underclass; (2) if businesses don't find it profitable to foot the entire bill, a government subsidy—through an improved public school system and various other conduits—may be in order; (3) such policies are ever more urgent in view of the growing fraction of American infants entering the world in circumstances that otherwise bode ill for their economic prospects.

Even if the tight labor market proves benign, as hoped, young labor force entrants may face a major frustration: the "pig in the python." The relatively few

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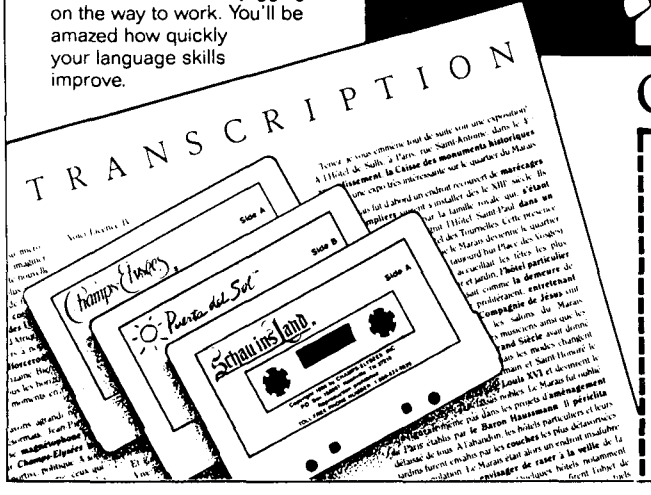

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younger workers will have many older ones—the baby boomers—above them on the career ladder. So though wages for each position will grow, promotion from one position to the next could be slow, even for those who have mastered their jobs. This could frustrate attempts to give the disadvantaged stronger ties to the workplace.

In deciding how much to invest in the training of workers, companies will be weighing that cost against the cost of other ways to cope with a tight labor market. R&D budgets will grow as employers substitute physical capital and technical know-how for labor. When feasible, capital will be exported, along with jobs, as employers take advantage of cheap foreign labor. Immigration restrictions may even be loosened by Congress, especially for skilled workers. This policy question will be highly charged, and its resolution could affect the ability of lower-income workers to make it into the economic mainstream. Employers will also try to increase the compatibility of work and family life in an effort to squeeze more labor out of women. Flexible work schedules, subsidized child care, care for the elderly, and liberal parental-leave policies may become the rule.

All of these adaptations will be costly, and can be expected to take some toll on the nation's standard of living. But on balance, the standard of living is likely to grow during the 1990s; though GNP growth may slow because of fewer net entrants to the labor force, GNP per capita should grow because of rising wages, lower unemployment, and a relatively smaller dependent population. Moreover, the hump in the labor force (that "pig in the python") will be situated in very productive ages—the 30s and 40s. It is worth noting that over the past decade, when Japan has been running up huge trade surpluses, it has had roughly the same population bulge that America will have in coming years. Indeed, in the years ahead, as Japan's (and West Germany's) labor force ages rapidly, it will begin to graduate increasingly large cohorts of retirees, who consume more than they produce. This should help the United States regain some of its dominance in the world economy. And we would be well advised to invest any resulting savings as wisely as the Japanese have invested theirs. For in two decades, America's baby-boom generation begins to retire, and the resulting burden on the working population will grow for the following 20 years.

Of course, raising our economic stature presupposes that we meet the great work force challenge of the next decade, and bring millions of people on the margins of the economy into its mainstream. It will take uncharacteristic vision, courage, and conviction for public-policy-makers to deal systematically with problems of the lower-income classes in this era of fiscal belt-tightening. But failing to act will amount to complete reliance on the private sector. Some may conclude that the private sector approach is preferable because it imposes no direct costs on taxpayers. But the costs to society will be no less real. They will simply be spread among consumers in the form of higher prices. Given that businesses make decisions in accordance with a profit-loss sheet that doesn't take into account such national goals as social mobility and social harmony, abdicating this realm of policy to the private sector is likely to prove inadequate, and ultimately immoral.

Too many cooks spoil the books.

THE FUDGE FACTOR

By Robert Kuttner

Once again Congress and the administration have slithered around the discipline of the Gramm-Rudman amendment. The budget resolution approved by Congress in late May allegedly produces a fiscal 1990 deficit of $99 billion, a shade under the Gramm-Rudman limit of $100 billion. The real deficit will be more like $130 billion.

To understand why the Democratic Congress accepted bogus administration arithmetic, one needs to understand the tacit conspiracy between Republicans who want to avoid raising taxes and Democrats who want to defend social spending. For both groups, the worse the economic scenario, the more painful the combination of spending cuts and tax increases that must be found.

This year an imaginative array of subterfuges has been enlisted in the name of this bipartisan fraud. The first type consists of overly sanguine macroeconomic assumptions. For example, the administration's estimate of the rate of economic growth is a robust 3.2 percent. Congress accepted this number, even though its own Budget Office (with a far better record for accuracy) forecasts growth at only 2.2 percent. The administration thinks the inflation rate will be just 3.7 percent, while the CBO says more realistically that it will be 4.9 percent. And most wondrously, the

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administration projects interest rates on 90-day Treasury bills of just 5.5 percent. The more prudent CBO assumes 7.1 percent. The current T-bill rate—an indicator of government borrowing costs—is in excess of eight percent.

A second brand of subterfuge involves assorted budgetary gimmickry. For example, the administration decided to shovel out nearly a billion dollars of 1990 farm subsidy payments a year ahead of schedule, so they show up as fiscal 1989 outlays, which are no longer up for debate, rather than in the 1990 budget. Next year, when Congress is wrestling with the 1991 Gramm-Rudman ceiling, the farm subsidies will again pass through a time warp, being placed on the 1990 budget. And so it goes. In bookkeeping terms, this ghostly outlay never occurs.

The administration also determined that a half-billion dollars worth of uncashed Food Stamps can be washed off the government books, creating a one-time bookkeeping windfall. And then there's the Postal Service. The Post Office budget is cyclical; just before an increase in postal rates, it runs a deficit; just after one, it runs a surplus. The Post Office is currently in the deficit phase of the cycle. So the administration has moved it off-budget, instantly removing $2 billion of deficit. These various accounting ploys spuriously cut the measured deficit by at least $10 billion.

The granddaddy of all subterfuges, though, is the S&L bailout. The Democrats on the House Ways and Means Committee refused to go along with the administration plan to put the cost of the bailout off-budget, which would have cost taxpayers an additional $4 billion to $5 billion because of the higher interest rates on borrowing that doesn't have the full faith and credit of the United States. But the Democrats, while proposing that the costs of the S&L bailout be on-budget, and hence covered by Treasury borrowing, did not want to count them toward the Gramm-Rudman ceiling. The administration indignantly threatened a veto, objecting that the Democrats' plan would make a public mockery of the Gramm-Rudman discipline (whereas its own plan merely makes a private—and more expensive—mockery of it). The issue is still unresolved. Shame on both parties.

One reason why the bipartisan conspiracy to cook the books is looking relatively good right now is that April tax receipts came in about $20 billion in excess of projections, owing to unforeseen effects of the 1986 tax reform act, most provisions of which took full effect in 1988. It remains to be seen whether this is just a one-time windfall. But thanks to it, and to creative government accounting, the CBO now thinks the 1990 budget deficit will exceed the $100 billion target by only $10 or $20 billion. Rudy Penner, formerly CBO director and now at the Urban Institute, takes a more pessimistic view, placing the real deficit at more like $130 billion to $140 billion.

What happens if the deficit misses the Gramm-Rudman target? Contrary to what you may think, nothing. By the time the final totals of actual outlays and receipts come in, last year's budget is last year's news, and Gramm-Rudman provides no consequence. The teeth in the Gramm-Rudman law—the mechanical "sequestering" that everyone tries to avoid—takes effect only if the *estimates*, not the final numbers, miss the target. This is, of course, an open invitation to cook the estimates. The 1988 actual deficit, if anyone cares, came in at $155 billion. The Gramm-Rudman ceiling was $144 billion. Oh, well.

But does any of this really matter all that much? After all, Gramm-Rudman seems to be doing its work in a gross sort of way, despite all the fudging, by enforcing a measure of fiscal discipline. The deficit, as a fraction of gross national product, is gradually coming down, isn't it?

Yes, but the budget subterfuge does matter, in four respects. First, virtually all reputable projections forecast that the deficit will begin going back up next year; in a year when the Gramm-Rudman target drops to $65 billion, the CBO forecasts a deficit of $140 billion. Second, the phony numbers don't fool the financial markets. As a result of the high (actual) deficit, the Federal Reserve is forced to fight inflation with tight money, which raises interest rates, discourages investment, slows real growth, and stimulates another round of dollar overvaluation. Third, the deficit will plateau at around $130 billion to $140 billion only because of the escalating Social Security surplus. Instead of being saved, that money is being used to pay for our fiscal irresponsibility. The on-budget, rest-of-government deficit grows from $211 billion in 1989 to $238 billion in 1994. This growth will be largely concealed by the Social Security surplus. But after 2005, only 16 years from now, the Social Security budget will cease being a net source of surplus, and then there will be a double deficit made up of on-budget red ink plus Social Security payout obligations.

The biggest problem of all with budget subterfuge, at least from a liberal point of view, is that it continues the legislative stalemate: no money can be spent on a series of deferred domestic needs, President Bush gets to keep his no-new-taxes pledge, and national priorities never quite get sorted out. With a few notable exceptions, the representatives and senators who have made a serious fuss about the budget fraud are the austerity hawks—Republican (and some Democratic) legislators who want substantially faster deficit reduction for its own sake. For the most part, the liberals who want more domestic spending, steeper military cuts, and a mild tax increase have gone along with the bipartisan phony numbers conspiracy in order to preserve a few crumbs of domestic outlay.

When the budget resolution was finally put to a vote on May 18, 16 Senate Republicans voted against it, all on the grounds that it didn't cut spending enough. Twenty-one Democrats voted against it, challenging the bogus arithmetic—but none argued squarely for a different mix of expenditures and taxes. In the House, where 77 conservative Republican backbenchers voted

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against the budget, the only real counterbudget was one prepared by the Congressional Black Caucus, which laudably called for a smaller net deficit made up of higher taxes, lower military outlay, and increased domestic spending. This budget got 81 votes.

Admittedly, it is extremely hard for Democratic politicians to fight for a different set of priorities by challenging the administration's arithmetic. Ever since President Reagan made political hash of the Democrats in 1981 with the original rosy scenario, they have appreciated the futility of gloom-and-doom fiscal politics. In that year, you may recall, Reagan went public with a giddily optimistic set of assumptions that seemed to permit him to have tax cuts, a defense buildup, and budget balance. When the Democrats unveiled an alternative budget cutting taxes slightly less, with a different mix of defense and domestic spending, they used the CBO's far more realistic economic assumptions. Reagan then went on television and declared that the Democrats' budget would not only give taxpayers a smaller tax cut—it would increase the deficit by a quarter trillion dollars! This was true, of course, but it was the result of the Democrats using real numbers and Reagan using phony ones. The president's program went on to prove itself much worse for the deficit than the Democrats' program would have been. But the quarter-trillion dollar deficit label stuck, and had the political effect of blaming the deficit on the Democrats. "The Democrats learned in 1981," says Robert Greenstein, director of the liberal Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "that you can't explain in a 30-second sound bite that your budget inflicts more pain because you're using more honest economic assumptions."

There is one counterstrategy available to Democrats: brinkmanship. They could hold out for honest assumptions and a very different mix of spending and taxing. If the administration refused to compromise, the Gramm-Rudman clock would start to tick, with an October 1 deadline. If the budget did not meet the target by that date, there would be automatic cuts, taken equally from domestic programs and military spending. The Democrats would be gambling that President Bush simply would not swallow a $30 billion to $40 billion cut in military outlays, that he would blink first and agree to a tax hike.

This, however, would require Democrats to have a coherent strategy, for once. It would also require them to risk cherished domestic spending. At various times a number of influential Democrats have flirted with this approach. But each time the Democratic leadership blinked first, and Democrats (like Senator Bennett Johnston) who genuinely relished a Gramm-Rudman showdown were tactically isolated. This paralysis results, in part, from the Democrats still thinking of themselves as the party of government—in the ninth year of a Republican presidency—with an institutional responsibility to be reasonable and judicious. Democrats who propose fiscal brinkmanship are warned that a budget stalemate would make Congress look bad. Moreover, the emerging Democratic leadership of George Mitchell in the Senate and Tom Foley in the House, though telegenic, is more cautious and consensus-seeking than are the rough-and-tumble Democrats of the Jim Wright school.

The process of muddling through thus continues, at an escalating cost to fiscal health, social priorities, and the viability of the Democrats as an effective opposition party. Maybe next year the projected $80 billion gap between the deficit and the Gramm-Rudman ceiling will finally force a reckoning. And maybe it won't. For the moment, the Democrats are not enthusiastic about either of the two roles available to them. They lack the convincing vision they need to make a tax-and-spend agenda good politics, and they're not willing to play Chicken Little as long as the sky refuses to fall.

The celebrated welfare 'consensus' falls apart.

REVENGE OF THE SOFTHEADS

By Mickey Kaus

The most important domestic policy debate of the year heated up recently on Capitol Hill, and practically nobody noticed. The debate was over how to reform the welfare system. You might think this would be topical, with the "wilding" in Central Park and a new wave of concern about the welfare-dependent "underclass." But the press's agenda says welfare reform is last year's issue. In 1988, after all, Congress passed the Family Support Act, which Senator Daniel Moynihan promised would "turn the welfare program upside down." When Congress passes a bill, the problem's solved, right? Reporters move on to other things.

Actually, when Congress passes a bill, the real debate often begins—over the regulations designed to elaborate on Congress's "intent." Regulations are typically

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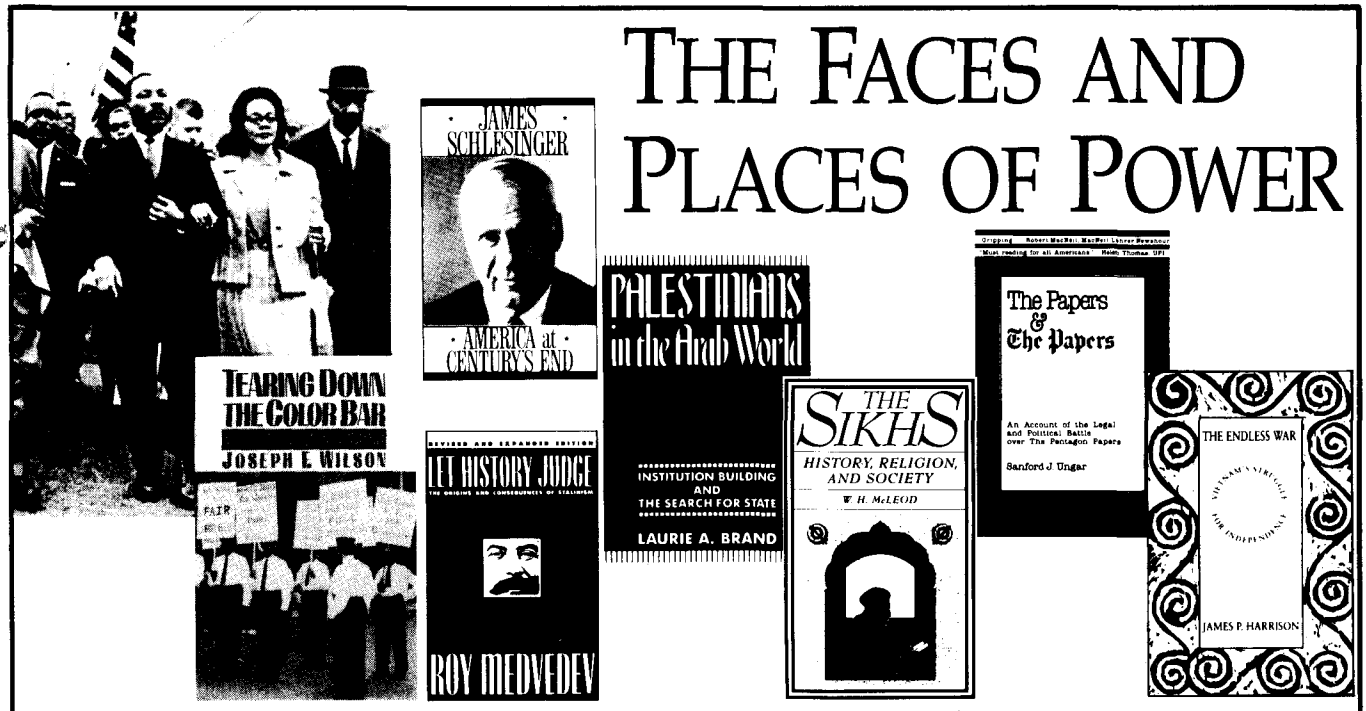
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written by executive branch bureaucrats after "comment" from interested parties. (Later, interested parties who don't like the regulations typically sue to get them overturned in court. The press doesn't pay much attention to that, either.) The welfare reform regulations are especially significant because the 1988 law didn't really decide the crucial question of what should be asked of the approximately four million adult recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), the basic welfare program for poor single parents (virtually all of them mothers). Instead, "welfare reform" only partially, and tentatively, resolved the conflict between two schools of reformist thought. Call them the Softs and the Hards.

The Softs see welfare reform as educating and training welfare mothers so they can get jobs. Softs worry about short-term effects on current recipients—how many mothers will be helped off welfare? Will that save more welfare money than the cost of the training? (Or, as the Softs would put it, are there "positive effects on program impacts and cost-effectiveness"?) Softs are willing to *require* welfare mothers to participate in education or training programs, but only because the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation (MDRC), a key Soft research group, has shown such mandatory programs to be mildly "cost-effective." Most congressional Democrats (if they support mandatory programs at all) are Softs. Governors—even conservative Republican governors—also worry about cost-effectiveness and tend to be Soft.

The Hards care less about helping current welfare mothers, or even saving current welfare dollars. They want welfare mothers to work, first, because they think welfare mothers *should* work. Hards tend to favor putting welfare mothers to work quickly, without lavish training or a lot of handwringing over whether the job has growth potential. Hards readily resort to "workfare" programs that make recipients work off their grants in public service jobs. If working helps today's welfare mothers build their skills, so much the better—but the focus of the Hards is on tomorrow, on discouraging young girls who aren't on welfare from having the out-of-wedlock babies that would put them there. While the Softs emphasize training, the Hards think about deterrence (though most would never use such an impolitic word). Under Reagan and (so far) Bush, the Department of Health and Human Services has been the main Hard power center in Washington.

The 1988 statute was more Soft than Hard. It provided $3.3 billion for expanded benefits, and for "matching" funds to induce states to ask more of welfare recipients. Part of the money will pay for the day care that all sides agree must be provided before mothers are required to do anything. Under the new law, however, they are more likely to be required to sign up for training or remedial education than to do actual work. The law allows states to exempt about half the caseload (mainly mothers with children under three). And mothers with kids under six need not study, train, or work more than 20 hours a week.

The Reagan administration did succeed in including one Hard provision: that states get a certain percentage of those recipients who *can* be required to do something to actually do it. On its face, this "participation" requirement is not revolutionary. Only 20 percent (of the half of the caseload that's not exempt) must be "participating"—that's 400,000 welfare recipients, out of four million—at any one time. Even this isn't required until 1995. And no state has to comply. If it doesn't want to meet the 20 percent threshold, the worst that will happen is it won't get the extra federal matching funds.

But will even the minority of the caseload that must "participate" really be doing something substantial? That depends on what "participation" means—which is, of course, the question Congress left for the regulations to answer. Preliminary rules issued in April by HHS answer it by nudging welfare reform a bit in the Hard direction. Basically, HHS says that in order to count as "participating," welfare mothers in education programs must be "making satisfactory progress"; those in most work or training programs must work or train 20 hours a week.

This doesn't sound terribly oppressive. But that didn't stop the Softs (in particular, the National Governors' Association) from calling the 20-hour rule "odious" at hearings late last month. Governors, not surprisingly, want the extra federal money without strings. Governor Michael Castle of Delaware, showing little enthusiasm for "turning the welfare program upside down," whined to Moynihan's Senate subcommittee that "the proposed rules will actually force significant changes in current programs. . . ."

In particular, Softs fear the HHS rules will encourage states to resort to workfare, which is the easiest program to run for 20 hours a week or more. Softs tolerate workfare, but only when it can be shown to "benefit" the recipient. Welfare mothers "don't get much by being assigned to some work site to act as a clerk or empty wastebaskets," Cesar Perales, New York Governor Mario Cuomo's super-Soft welfare chief, testified. (The Hard response would be: Who says the point of reform is to help welfare mothers "get" something extra? Perales assumes, as a starting point, that people deserve welfare benefits without working.)

In place of HHS's 20-hour rule, the Softs propose to "allow states to define what constitutes participation"—even if that turns out to be only three hours of rudimentary "job search" a week. This would effectively gut the participation requirements, which Softs never liked in the first place. In essence, the Softs are attempting to strip the 1988 law of its minimal Hard elements before they even go into effect.

The Softs will probably fail in this pre-emptive strike. Hards were buoyed at a House hearing when several Republican representatives actually showed up to express outrage that the governors would try to weasel out of the law's minimal requirements. Besides, when it comes to regulation-writing, HHS has the upper hand.

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If congressional Democrats don't like the rules, all they can do is harass the rule-writers by making them spend their lives testifying on Capitol Hill—unless, that is, Congress wants to overrule them by passing a new law, which it doesn't have the stomach to do. (As for the inevitable lawsuits, they probably won't fare too well in a judiciary now studded with Reagan appointees.)

This doesn't mean welfare reform will work. In fact, the fight over "participation" demonstrates how strained the shotgun marriage of Soft and Hard is. Just as body counts were a clumsy, perverse measure of whether we were winning the war in Vietnam, "participation rates" and "hour counts" are clumsy devices for forcing governors to get tough with welfare mothers. One potential perversity: when a welfare mother finds work and goes off welfare, she isn't "participating" in training anymore and doesn't count toward the state's magic 20 percent. So states have a bureaucratic incentive to hold recipients in training programs as long as possible, even when they could get jobs. Another perversity: states might simply pad 15-hour training programs with make-work hours (as the governors practically threatened to do).

But the grossest perversities are embedded within the Soft model itself. Thanks to the Softs, welfare reform offers AFDC mothers elaborate (and expensive) training and schooling. If those welfare mothers get jobs, they are then entitled to "transitional" day care and Medicaid for a year. But none of these valuable goodies will be available to the millions of poor mothers who never go on welfare in the first place—the people who, as Jesse Jackson likes to remind us, "work every day." Two typists could find themselves working side by side, doing identical tasks—but one would get health insurance and day care from the government because she'd been on the dole. That's no incentive to stay off welfare, and it isn't fair.

The Softs' strategy of cajoling and pushing single mothers into training and work, after they are already getting welfare, is inherently cumbersome. Mothers must be summoned to the welfare office. "Employability plans" must be "negotiated." Training and day-care slots are lined up. Then, if welfare mothers don't show up, their excuses must be evaluated, and finally "sanctions" (which the 1988 law weakens) are imposed. In 1985 the Social Security Administration ran an experiment in San Diego to see what would happen if welfare officials really tried to force the *entire* caseload to do something. After a year about half the target recipients were still "non-participating." They either had excuses—health, drug addiction, another pregnancy—or were "non-cooperative," or were otherwise lost to bureaucratic "friction."

Leading Softs, such as Judith Gueron of MDRC, cite the San Diego study as evidence that achieving a "participation rate" of 20 percent isn't so easy. But it's also evidence that the Soft approach simply doesn't work very well. As Dennis Boyle, deputy director of California's Department of Social Services, admitted in the course of protesting the HHS rules, "It's just not realistic to think we'll get large amounts of those people who so desperately need help" to show up for 20 hours. "It's easy to get 'A' students into the classroom," Boyle noted. "It's the 'F' students who are tough to get." But the whole Soft scheme depends precisely on getting the "F" students into classrooms.

In fact, there is little hope that last year's welfare reform will resolve, or even dramatically ameliorate, the problem of the underclass. A damning report by the Congressional Budget Office, issued in January, predicts that over five years the 1988 law will prompt only 50,000 families—about 1.3 percent of the caseload—to leave welfare. Arkansas's job search and training program, considered wildly successful, reduced caseloads by 11 percent. The San Diego experiment managed about nine percent, which is about the best Softs can hope to do in an urban setting. The more candid Softs don't even pretend the 1988 reform will transform the underclass. Gueron says she only expects a reduction in welfare of "several percentage points." That won't solve the problem, she admits, explaining, "I'm not a person who seeks solutions to things. I seek to make systems work better. . . . I don't look to [welfare reform] to make a radical transformation. I don't think you need it to be cost-effective."

People who do seek solutions to things may be expected to gravitate toward a pure Hard approach. Liberals are already splitting on the issue. David Ellwood, a welfare expert at Harvard University, is often cited as a leading liberal critic of Charles Murray's argument that the solution to welfare is simply to eliminate it. But Ellwood himself advocates cutting off welfare payments entirely after a mother has been on AFDC for 18 to 36 months. Those mothers would be offered a public service job, and if they turned it down they would be on their own. Ellwood's scheme eliminates the clumsy bureaucracy inherent in the Soft approach—there would be no need to evaluate excuses or impose "sanctions." When time expired, welfare would end, period. The plan offers little perverse incentive to go on AFDC, and might even function as a long-term deterrent. A radical Ellwood-like solution was recently endorsed by the Ford Foundation, in a report signed by such respectable Democratic figures as Eleanor Holmes Norton (head of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission under Jimmy Carter), Vernon Jordan (former head of the National Urban League), and Sol Chaikin of the garment workers' union.

This new Hard thinking has yet to reach Democrats in Congress. That could change when the marginal impact of last year's law becomes clear. (In particular, Moynihan, who hyped the 1988 reform shamelessly, will have some explaining to do.) Congress may not be in the mood to "revisit" welfare reform anytime in this century. But voters will have other ideas when they discover that the law designed to put welfare mothers to work did no such thing. By then, even the press should be ready to pay attention. •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

The Trail of the Grail

Reviewing an Indiana Jones film is almost like reviewing a tornado or a flood. It comes on less like a construct than like a force of nature—human nature, in this case, which seems to will the film onto the screen independently of those who made it.

This is obviously a tribute to the people who originated IJ and who in a sense have served as guides for audience impulse. Two others, Menno Meyjes and Jeffrey Boam, are credited with collaboration on the latest IJ story and with the screenplay, which credit I'm sure they deserve; but clearly this film, like the IJ films before it, attests to the deep audience awareness of George Lucas and Steven Spielberg—chiefly of Spielberg, who directed. (Lucas co-wrote the story and co-produced.)

Oceans of ink, a few drops in this column, have washed over the subject of Spielberg as enactor of daydream, the realizer of those boyhood fantasies that are so jealously preserved by men. Spielberg wonderfully exemplifies the twinning of fantasy life and film, the sense that film exists to provide a public vehicle for private fantasy. He has been making films since he was in grade school, has never wanted to do anything but make films, most of which are evidently the films he dreamed of making when he was a boy. The two exceptions to this fervently inbred view were *The Color Purple* and *Empire of the Sun*. (*1941* was really about films.) But mainly he has dealt with prepubescent male fantasy. Even in a war picture, *Empire of the Sun*, the protagonist was a boy.

"Prepubescent" doesn't mean that there are no women in Spielberg films, only that—however explicit the sex bits may be—they seem to be there only to supply some stuff that grown-ups insist on. Sex in the latest IJ has a new twist: IJ and his father, without knowing it, enjoy the same woman. But even this coincidence, which might seem much more than coincidence in other hands, is here only a wry male joke, no more than if they both by coincidence had visited the same restaurant.

Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade (Paramount), Spielberg and Lucas tell us, is justly titled: it's the final item in a trio including *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. Maybe they are running out of sacred objects for the central quest of the plot. First it was the Ten Commandments, then the Sankara stone, and now it's the Holy Grail. In Panavision. What's left?

The year of the main action is 1938, and the chief villains, once again, are Nazis. "I hate those guys," says Indy when he comes up against them. Like that line, his dialogue throughout is a nice balance of comic-book and comic-book mockery. A novelty this time is the participation of his father, an archaeologist before him, who has spent years tracking down clues to the whereabouts of the Grail. (No mention of Monsalvat where Parsifal, when last seen, was guarding it.) The father-son relationship is nicely handled—no TV goo, just teasing rivalry between two men who were never really close.

Harrison Ford once more is Indy, once more giving the part the conviction that he is a scholar who is plunged into wild adventures, plus enough conviction that he can handle those adventures. Dad is Sean Connery, which fulfills in a way an old Spielberg-Lucas hunger. The press tells us that in 1977 they dreamed of making a James Bond film with Connery; now they've got him, playing the father of their own creation. Connery is warm and funny, but I confess I'd rather have seen him playing the father of James Bond: it would have seemed more organic. Connery's best achievement here is in almost making it credible that, at his age, he could battle atop a racing tank, etc.

Spielberg has an ingenuity that comes from psychic understanding. The opening sequence, in 1912, is set in Monument Valley, Utah. John Ford country. From atop a butte we see a file of horsemen crossing the valley floor at a walk. John Ford people. Closer, we watch from the rear a presumable line of cavalrymen as their horses make their way between the rocks. Then the leader calls a halt and orders the troop to dismount. We get

FILMS WORTH SEEING

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our first head-on view of the riders. Except for the leader, they are boys—Boy Scouts of 14 or so, Indy (played by River Phoenix) among them. Thus Spielberg slyly leads the younger part of his audience to think they are watching a Western, then suddenly puts them right in it. Spielberg knows what that audience wants because he wanted it, and still wants it, himself.

Minutes later comes the first chase in the film, young Indy riding furiously away from nasty pursuers. A train is crossing the valley, and Indy swings aboard, as do his pursuers. And what kind of train is it? A circus train, complete with a lion, snakes, and a car full of magic apparatus. Another daydream fulfilled. Spielberg must be the least frustrated man alive.

The grown Indy travels to Venice and Austria and Berlin and the Middle East, trying to keep the Holy Grail out of Nazi hands. John Williams's music—a constant in Spielberg films—accompanies Indy on his travels, obligingly menacing in Utah, a touch of mandolin tinkle in Venice, and so on. Williams's scores do a good deal to support the feeling of authentic fakery.

Once again, however, despite all the storms at sea and catacomb escapes and sudden fissures in the earth, this latest IJ picture, like the earlier ones, is more amusing than exciting. I'd suspect myself of not ever having had sufficient adolescent fantasy if it weren't for a film like *Major League*. I got a great deal more excitement out of the payoff baseball game at the end of that picture than out of all the landscape over which Spielberg's camera keeps rolling.

Leslie Halliwell, the English film enthusiast who died earlier this year, was a sort of mufti academic. He loved to collect data, which is not much more than many a so-called scholar in the humanities does, and Halliwell did it with a great deal more zest than many accepted scholars.

He spent over 20 years as chief program buyer for ITV in Britain, and out of all the film-viewing entailed in the job came his two major books—two series of books, really. *Halliwell's Film Guide* is now in its sixth edition (paper, $19.95, 1,186 pp.). *Halliwell's Filmgoer's and Video Viewer's Companion* is now in its ninth edition (cloth, $42.50, 786 pp.). Both books are published by Scribners and have three-columned pages.

The *Companion* is mainly a biographical dictionary with some entries on specific films and on topics, such as the use of seaside resorts in films. From the *Companion*, you can learn, for instance, that there was an earlier Harrison Ford (1892-1957), no relation, who was an

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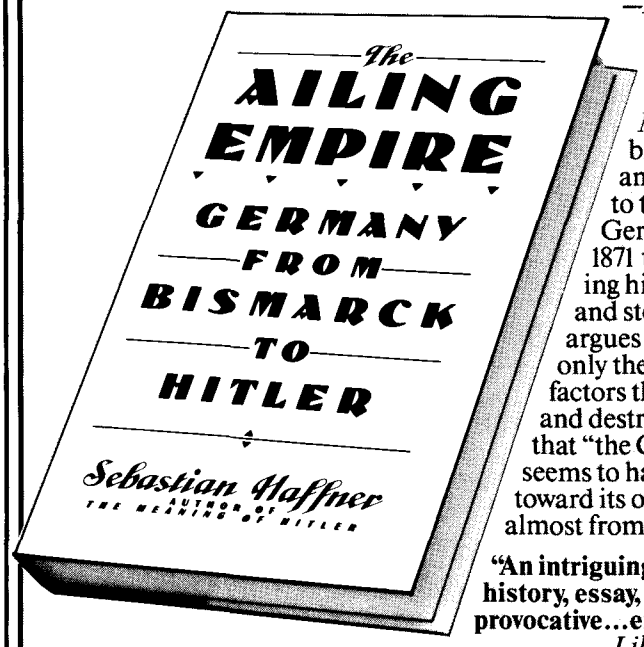

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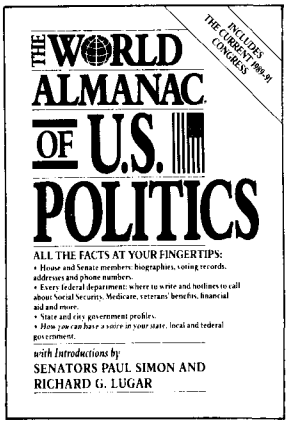
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"American leading man of the silent screen." The book also includes a number of amusing quizzes.

The *Guide* contains pertinent information on more than 16,000 films, along with a very brief synopsis of each and, usually, Halliwell's opinion. The book would be better off without those opinions, which are frequently less than lightweight, but at least he often includes other people's contradictory opinions.

If Halliwell's books don't belong in every library, they certainly belong on every desktop.

Robert Brustein on Theater

The Hero of the Nursery

Ibsen's **Peer Gynt** is one of the great plays and great anomalies of the modern theater. Written, along with *Brand*, when Ibsen was living in Rome, drunk with sunshine, thawing out his imagination from frozen Northern constraints, it is a whopping poetic extravaganza that would seem to be unstageable in original form. Two to three times as long as a conventional play, and roaming over most of the Western Hemisphere, *Peer Gynt* requires at least two days to perform, innumerable set changes, a huge cast, and, most importantly, an actor capable of transforming from extreme youth to extreme old age in the course of a journey that spans not only continents but Time itself. Some productions (Ciulei's version, for example, at the Guthrie) manage to dodge this problem by casting three separate actors as Peer. The Hartford Stage Company version uses a single actor—Richard Thomas—who elects to ignore the aging process altogether.

Thomas attempts a character change in only one scene—the Act IV opening in Morocco where, a coarse capitalist shrouded in cigar smoke, he hoarsely recounts his history as slave merchant and China trader to a group of equally venal international entrepreneurs. Soon after, however, he reverts to characteristic boyishness, and even in Africa he is dressed in his original costume, adorned with appropriate accessories (a white jacket and black bow tie added to his standard underwear top, red suspenders, black pants, and boots). Thomas wears the same clothes for 50 years—no wonder he smells a bit of must under his armpits.

The decision to keep Peer youthful throughout his life span is a bold choice, which is reinforced by John Conklin's ingenious scenic strategy. When the lights come up on the first scene, we see a child's nursery, complete with wooden crib, rocking horse, stuffed cat, rubber balls, and miniaturized buildings, including a little castle and a small house. In the background a wooden boat is sitting on a swath of blue silk and above hang a clock, a wheel, and a toy horse. All of these items will eventually play their part in Peer's odyssey; he carries his childhood with him wherever he goes.

Scenes change largely through the agency of colored fabric—yellow silk represents the desert (with the toy castle downstage and a burning sun behind the backdrop), billowing black oilcloth represents the stormy sea. His mother, Ase, is stranded on the roof of the toy house and dies in the crib; the ship that explodes in Act IV is the miniature vessel from Peer's nursery; the Sultan's steed is a giant version of Peer's toy horses; the tumbleweed is suggested by the rubber balls, rolling mysteriously on stage. For Peer, the nursery is the world. And the decay of this world, after his return to Norway as a young-old man, is symbolized by the decay and ruin of his childhood possessions.

This approach sacrifices some of the majesty and darkness and savagery of the play, so impressively realized in Patrice Chereau's 1982 Paris production. There the Great Sphinx and the statue of Memnon were almost the size of the originals; here, they are just a few more items from Peer's playroom. When Chereau's Peer wielded an ax, he hacked away at the proscenium, sending splinters into the audience; Thomas must be satisfied with a few whacks in the air. Paris provided the entire top deck of a ship, complete with rigging, lifeboats, and winches; Hartford's director, Mark Lamos, can afford only a miniature smokestack and a twirling helm. A number of Lamos's effects are similar to Chereau's—the backdrop storm, for example, and the *Marat/Sade* madmen with their pasty white faces. But, clearly, American resident theater economics dictate a considerably more simplified production scheme than that allowed by European state subsidy.

The Hartford *Peer*, nevertheless, has qualities that compensate for Parisian size and grandeur, notably American playfulness and whimsicality. Chereau took an essentially existentialist approach, which gave the play a postmodern bleakness at the cost of its folktale charm. Thomas, who has charm in abundance, brings a wholesome apple-pie sunniness to all his adventures. His scenes with his mother, played by Patricia Connolly as an affectionately cranky New England school marm torn between spanking and hugging a truant charge, have the quality of domestic comedy, and her death scene, with Peer perched behind her crib-confined body on a rocking chair, riding her to heaven, is deeply affecting. (Characteristically, he doesn't stay for the burial.)

The village scenes that follow are out of the Scandinavian exhibit at Epcot Center—stock choreography performed by twirling and clapping rustics dressed like Amish gauchos. But the episodes in the troll kingdom are smashing. Peer abducts and rapes the bride Ingrid, who trails forlornly after him in a torn white wedding gown and one red shoe. When he hits his head on a rock, he has what may be a dream beginning with the seduction of the Woman in Green (the Troll King's Daughter), played by the same actress in a green wedding gown and one red shoe—and two additional elements, a pig snout and a tail.

All the trolls he later meets are animalistic versions of the villagers, and their feast is a brutish rock 'n' roll variant of the wedding party—a barbecue of beast and human heads by pig-snouted, monkey-eared guards carrying automatic weapons. If the villagers seem drawn from Disneyland, the trolls appear to have escaped from the island of Doctor Moreau. Grossest of all is the Troll King—played by Stephen Rowe as a sweating, slavering, pork-bellied Stanley Kowalski with horns—who garrotes Peer with his tail, farts over his prone body, and forces him to drink his daughter's urine ("the thing that counts is it's homemade").

Peer refuses to have his eye cut and become a genuine troll, but he nevertheless accepts the troll's credo—not "To thyself be true," but rather "To thyself be—enough." (One of the quarrels I have with Gerry Bamman and Irene B. Berman's otherwise witty adaptation is their misrendering of the troll motto as "Be yourself and that's enough.") Peer pursues his self throughout the play—in his encounter with the Great Boyg (oddly translated as "the Great Between"), in his temporary career as an Arab prophet, in his appearance before the Sphinx as a pith-helmeted tourist, carrying a Baedecker. Peer's failure to form a self suggests the confusion of character and personality in the weightless modern world (today it would be

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called an identity crisis), and it is Ibsen's genius to crown him Emperor of Self in the madhouse, the one place where Ego reigns supreme. "Common sense met its demise" (no match for William Archer's version: "Absolute reason expired at eleven o'clock"), shouts the head doctor, madder than any of his inmates, as the strains of "Ode to Joy" pulse through the loudspeakers.

"To be oneself, the self must die," Peer is told by the Button Molder, preparing to melt him down to cast a new and better soul. Peer realizes, at the end, that his self—and life—had always been preserved in the faith and hope of his innocent love, Solveig. But Solveig's forbearance and forgiveness remain, for modern audiences, the most problematic aspect of the play. Confirming this, the Hartford actress, Tara Hugo, reads her concluding lines less like a patient Penelope celebrating her Ulysses' return than like a resentful proto-feminist, smoldering over Peer's 50-year night out in exotic places while she's been stuck at home with the sewing. It's a relevant contemporary touch, but it takes some of the emotion out of the swell mother-child resolution at the conclusion.

Actually, the Hartford production—like the Bamman-Berman adaptation—doesn't rise often to the emotional heights of the play. The couplets and quatrains give the dialogue an arch contemporary tone ("Allow me to be your fond adviser / Drop dead—you'll make good fertilizer"), but the deeper, darker chords come off sounding a little bland. Although Ibsen's first three acts (here called "Into the Mountains") have a unity of style and purpose well realized in the writing and the acting, the more difficult surrealist edge of Acts IV and V ("The Voyage") is not always properly sustained.

Thomas, so fresh and graceful in the first part, does not, I think, sufficiently reveal Peer's moral degeneration as the play proceeds. How could he when he shows no physical degeneration either? Ibsen's hero has grown cruel and cranky by the time he returns to Norway; Thomas never seems to lose his wholesome disposition. Ibsen indicts Peer for the sin of *hahlveit* (half-and-halfness), for being a will-less mediocrity incapable of either great deeds or great crimes. The second part of the Hartford production shares some of those transgressions, attempting no daring leaps, no singular departures that could help it transcend a general competence. The only artistic excess is in the snow effects that spill over even in the desert scenes.

Still, just to stage this awesome work and make it continuously engrossing over five full hours is a major achievement for a resident theater, and the Hartford Stage Company deserves a resounding salute for its accomplishment. Mel Marvin's well-orchestrated score—which owes something to Sibelius's tone poems, something to 18th-century Irish music, and a lot to Beethoven—provides strong reinforcement to dramatic climaxes and transitions; Pat Collins's lighting design plays like a palette of colors and shadings on Conklin's imaginative set pieces.

For all my cavils, I suspect the Bamman-Berman adaptation will now become the standard version (Bamman, by the way, was one of Ciulei's Peers at the Guthrie); and, for all my cavils, Thomas should be warmly praised for his intelligence, commitment, energy, and endurance. The Hartford *Peer Gynt* may have lost some depth by making its hero a perpetual adolescent imprisoned in an eternal nursery, but most of this difficult play is there in all its amplitude and magnitude, confirming its important position as a bridge between the conventions of 19th-century German Romanticism and the spiky, thorny dilemmas of modern theater.

Party Favors

BY THANE GUSTAFSON

The Long Road to Freedom: Russia and Glasnost by Walter Laqueur

(Scribners, 325 pp., $21.95)

Gorbachev is splitting American conservatives as Brezhnev once split American liberals. Conservatives now debate among themselves whether to try to help the general secretary by opening up trade; whether to counsel caution to Poles, Armenians, and Balts; how to respond to Gorbachev's arms control initiatives. Temporarily, at least, the traditional lines dividing liberal and conservative thinking about Russia have virtually disappeared.

With Walter Laqueur's new book, the conservative view of history and human nature is clearly and eloquently restated. Cultures and societies evolve slowly; truly historic change is measured in decades; and therefore the Soviet system is unlikely to change in its essence under Gorbachev. *Glasnost* is not only reversible, it is unlikely to continue. Laqueur's book poses clearly what are emerging as the crucial issues in the appraisal of what is happening in the Soviet Union today: Has Soviet society itself changed? Has Soviet political culture changed? And these, of course, are precisely the questions on which liberals and conservatives classically divide, no matter what society they address.

Laqueur is that rarity, a self-made scholar who has become, by sheer ability, an internationally renowned author and university professor without so much as a college degree. He is the author of over a dozen important books on communism, fascism, and nationalism, but his first love was Russia. As a young man, laid up with a broken leg while working on a kibbutz, Laqueur began taking Russian lessons from a former teacher from the Ukraine. It was the start of a lifelong attachment to Russian culture and history: he has always approached Russia by the most direct path, through its history, its literature, and its people. He perfected his Russian in the 1950s and 1960s by spending his summers with relatives in Stavropol Province in the North Caucasus, where a local Party boss named Mikhail Gorbachev was already busy building his career. By the 1960s Laqueur was one of the West's best-known experts on the Soviet Union, and the founder and first editor of *Survey*, over the years perhaps the most influential Western periodical on Soviet affairs.

But the Brezhnev years were depressing for anyone who loved Russian culture; and Laqueur was one of many Western observers who turned to other things. *The Long Road to Freedom* marks his return to Soviet affairs after a hiatus of two decades. Laqueur's new book is both a chronicle of the rise of *glasnost* during Gorbachev's first four years and an essay on the sources of change in the Soviet political system. Laqueur likes to quote Augustine's observation that nothing can be known except by sympathy—and, he adds, by antipathy. He looks at Bolshevism and Stalinism through the eyes of Locke and Burke. He has never made a secret of his profound dislike of the Soviet regime over the decades, together with his admiration for the peoples of the Soviet Union and their cultures. Under-

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standably, then, Laqueur's reactions to *glasnost* are divided between hope for the long term and skepticism for the short.

Of all the possible developments after Brezhnev's death in 1982, the flowering of *glasnost* was the least expected, not only by Western Russia-watchers, but by Soviet citizens themselves. The historian Leonid Batkin recalls the anxious conversations around Moscow dinner tables at that time: "Won't things be even worse after Brezhnev?" "They'll tighten the screws even more." "Will there be another Great Purge?" The book that contains these recollections, *Inogo ne Dano* (There Is No Other Way), is itself one of the most remarkable symbols of *glasnost*: a hit parade of essays by reformist authors, any one of which could have landed its author in jail seven years ago, published now by an official Soviet press.

Laqueur's book abounds in all the paradoxes and the surprises that accompany such a turnabout. For a start, *glasnost* is being carried out by an unlikely combination of insiders and outsiders. Leading the way are the central media in Moscow, overseen by government officials who in most cases had already done very well under Brezhnev. Indeed, in some cases (such as Viktor Afanasev, chief editor of *Pravda*) they hold exactly the same jobs as before. They have been joined by outsiders and sideliners who were the first to seize the proffered opening, while the establishment intelligentsia stood by cautiously and awaited developments. Thus the national soul-searching over Stalin and Stalinism, interrupted in the 1960s, was first resumed by non-historians such as the playwright Mikhail Shatrov and the novelist Anatoli Rybakov, while some of the earliest reformist views on economic reform to appear in print came from the sociologist Tatiana Zaslavskaia.

Writing in the fall of 1988, Laqueur saw signs that *glasnost* was already being slowed down. But this is another paradox of *glasnost*: the brakes and the accelerator are being applied at the same time and sometimes by the same people. *Glasnost* is running faster than ever, though with growing signs of official alarm and interference. Thus, just in the last few months, *glasnost* has spread beyond the realm of culture and into politics. This year has so far witnessed the first open criticism of the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, of Lenin's policies as one of the causes of Stalinism, as well as criticism of the *nomenklatura* system and the Party's own monopoly of power and ban on factions. Whereas *glasnost* was previously limited primarily to Moscow, the provinces are beginning to jump in. (Solzhenitsyn's reappearance in legal Soviet print, for example, started at the periphery last fall, first in a small railway workers' newspaper in Kiev and then in a literary journal from the southern city of Krasnodar.) And last but far from least, *glasnost* has taken hold, if unevenly as yet, in the non-Russian republics.

More and more previously forbidden data are appearing every day. The police have begun releasing numbers on suicides and violent crimes (16,710 murders in 1988, up 14 percent from 1987, although the press now criticizes the police for systematic underreporting). The Foreign Trade Ministry last year published statistics on key oil and gas exports for the first time in a decade. Soviet statisticians are working with American counterparts to improve their reporting and their methods, and Soviet politicians from Gorbachev on down are openly citing Western research on the Soviet economy, including analysis by the CIA.

Long-held taboos are falling daily. The press recently carried a free-for-all over Afghanistan, criticisms of Soviet East-West policy since World War II, attacks on the Soviet space program, and details of the recent elections to the new Congress of People's Deputies, despite the fact that many establishment candi-

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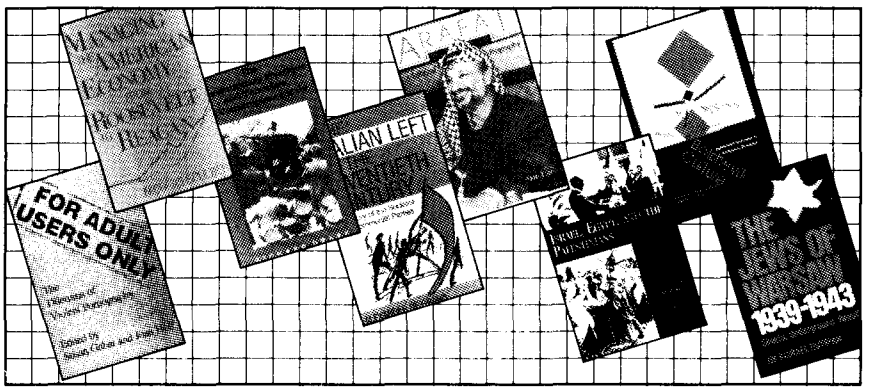

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dates were soundly drubbed. At the movies, the baring of collective memories that began with *Repentance* three years ago has moved on to *Little Vera*, bringing to Soviet screens not only what one Western reviewer delicately calls "full frontal *glasnost*," but at the same time an utterly gloomy view of the achievements of 70 years of socialism.

As a result, the surface of Soviet political life has been transformed. Laqueur does not fail to stress the extraordinary import of the events he describes. "The Soviet Union today," he writes, "is a halfway house between tyranny and freedom." Yet he remains cautious about the near-term significance and prospects of *glasnost*. A revolution may indeed be under way, but it will take a generation or more; and in the meantime there are bound to be lurches and reverses. Laqueur concludes that "*glasnost* has been a good beginning, no less and no more."

The immediate reason is that *glasnost* is a deliberate policy, adopted by the Gorbachev reformers to advance his reform program; it amounts to turning a tap. One of the most dramatic symptoms of impending crisis at the time of Brezhnev's death was that the people had begun boycotting the official media. The circulation of major newspapers dropped, attendance at movie theaters fell, political literature piled up in the bookstores unsold. By contrast, under *glasnost* the Soviet media, especially the more liberal ones, have boomed. *Izvestia*, for example, after slumping from 8.3 million readers in 1970 to 6.7 million in 1985, has soared to over 11 million today. But it is the media most closely identified with *glasnost* that have really prospered, aided by a new policy of opening up subscriptions to all who want them. *Argumenty i Fakty*, once the dull fact sheet of the "Knowledge" lecture society, is now one of the hottest sources of news; it has skyrocketed from 1.4 million subscribers in 1985 to over 20 million today. When *Novy Mir* began serializing *Dr. Zhivago* in January 1988, its circulation shot up from a half million to well over a million. Unquestionably, *glasnost* has succeeded in recapturing the attention of Soviet readers and viewers.

Gorbachev, it is clear, is an extraordinary politician and statesman. But he is a Party politician and a Leninist statesman; and his words, public and private, show that his fundamental view of artists and writers is little different from Lenin's. He speaks of the press as the "true means of organizing and educating the masses," and consequently, he argues, the press must be "a collective agitator, propagandist, and organizer of the masses." In Gorbachev's mind, artists and writers are

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still ultimately the state's engineers of the human soul (to borrow a phrase from the darkest Stalinist times). This premise is reflected in actual policy. A 1988 draft of the new press law, now in preparation, describes the press in much the same language as Gorbachev does. By contrast, an unofficial counterdraft recently offered by reformist journalists and legal scholars speaks of the press as implementing the principle of openness, providing accurate information, and enabling citizens to express their views—and nothing more. Thus the lines are drawn, and it is clear which side Gorbachev is ultimately to be found.

As Laqueur observes, the system of censorship, self-censorship, and oversight is still very much in place. There was a brief flurry of speculation in 1986 that the infamous Glavlit, the Main Administration for Safeguarding State Secrets in the Press, would be abolished. Instead it merely changed heads and was streamlined a bit, although it is a sign of the times that last November *Izvestia* carried an interview with Vladimir Boldyrev, the new chief censor, whereas in the past the most diligent censorship was devoted to any discussion of the existence of censorship itself. The official list of forbidden items—called the *Index*, but referred to as "the Talmud" among Soviet media people—has shrunk by about a third, but it still exists.

The Party Central Committee's old Department of Propaganda has been absorbed since last fall into a new and streamlined Ideological Department; the Party's "curators" (as the media overseers are called) are still on the job, though they now refrain from giving editors and producers direct daily instructions. Just what is permitted and what is forbidden cannot be predicted from day to day. But what is not in question is the state's fundamental power to intervene to suppress or to excise material it considers undesirable. Indeed, Gorbachev's own speeches are routinely "polished up" before they appear in print, sometimes with significant changes from the versions delivered on television.

Soviet media officials, as before, know that their jobs are listed on the official *nomenklatura* of the Party apparatus, and that they ultimately owe their livelihood to Central Committee headquarters on Old Square. That is why media controversies continue to land on the desk of the general secretary. Recently Gorbachev, pursued by the old guard's endless complaints about Vitaly Korotich, the editor of the flamboyant reformist weekly *Ogonek*, exclaimed wearily, "Why don't our writers adopt the principle of unilateral disarmament?" But the old guard will not give up, because they know that if they could get Gorbachev to change his mind, Korotich and the other reformist would be gone in a second. In other words, Moscow is still very far from any "privatization" of media politics.

But the management of the media in Moscow involves much more than simple censorship and administrative control. It rests on an elaborate system of graduated incentives and rewards that is built into the core of the command economy and the system of one-party rule. Even if Gorbachev abolished Glavlit tomorrow, *glasnost* would still not be safe.

The foundation of the system is the manipulation of scarcity. Take paper, for example, the most basic stuff of publishing. The United States produces 15 times more paper than the Soviet Union—a startling measure, incidentally, of the Soviets' historic obsession with heavy industry. Since paper is scarce, it is allocated centrally, and state bureaucracies bargain hard among themselves to get their share, which they then dole out to their own publishing houses. (Thus the Defense Ministry is in the publishing business, as is the nuclear power industry, and of course the Party itself. Goskomizdat, the State Committee for Publishing, complains that it is able to get its hands on only about 16 percent of the total supply.)

The potential for control in this rationing system is obvious, as are the obstacles to any real liberalization. Even if individuals were allowed to set up publishing cooperatives (and so far the Council of Ministers has ruled that publishing cooperatives will not be allowed), where would they get their paper? The reformers aim eventually to switch to wholesale markets in capital goods and raw materials, but scarce or strategic commodities will continue to be allocated centrally, and paper will surely be near the top of that list.

Modern printing and photoreproduction equipment is similarly scarce (again a reflection of past investment priorities), as is up-to-date technology for television and movies, as well as cable, chemicals, film, inks—in short, all the basic resources of the media. If the Soviet media wish to buy imported equipment, they must then bargain for an allocation of another, even scarcer commodity—hard currency. Only large bureaucracies can operate effectively in such an environment, and cooperatives, even if they were authorized, would hardly stand a chance except on a small scale. The point is that the supercentralization of the Soviet media monopolies, which we think of as the result of political control, is also a byproduct of central planning. The fu-

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ture health of *glasnost*, in other words, is tied to economic as well as political reform.

This is where the carrots come in. Ever since the 1920s, the Soviet "creative intelligentsia" has been organized in official unions that provide their members with lifelong perquisites: special restaurants, stores, sanatoria, and the like. To get in, one must be a working professional, which ensures a certain orthodoxy from the start. The system of controls and the system of privileges are designed to overlap closely; thus, for example, the heads of the various unions of journalists throughout the country are in principle elected, but traditionally they are the chief editors of the major Party dailies. The details differ from profession to profession, but the result is an interlocking directorate of literary and media officials who have risen through the bureaucracy and given proof of their loyalty.

It pays handsomely to belong to this establishment. Ever since Stalin's time, some of the richest legal millionaires in the U.S.S.R. have been the authors of best-selling books. Well-placed officials arrange large print runs, multiple editions, and favorable royalty rates for one another's books, and the country's 330,000 libraries provide a captive clientele. Under Brezhnev, even if an unorthodox author succeeded in getting published, the print run would be small and the royalties low.

Since there is only one game in town and so much rides on it, the troops of *glasnost* are rather in the position of the Bolsheviks in Petrograd in 1917, who knew that success depended on seizing the key nerve centers—the telephone exchange, the post office, the printing presses. There is a special fierceness to the battles between Soviet reformists and conservatives, because they are not simply fighting over politics or settling old scores; they are struggling for control of the central carrot factory. Once the liberals have seized a stronghold, they then behave much like those they have just evicted. They purge their predecessors, they cut their press runs, they hold up their movies.

In short, the power of the state over the media remains intact. Indeed, in some ways it is growing stronger all the time. The most important event of the last 20 years has been the spread of television to virtually every Soviet home. Initially, for lack of relay stations and satellites, the broadcasting system was regionally based and offered a good deal of local programming in local languages. But since then the Soviets have developed a modern satellite network and television has become highly centralized, beaming Moscow's perspective—largely in the Russian language—across the entire country.

But having uncorked the genie of popular opinion, can the Kremlin really bottle it up again? By now *glasnost* has built up such momentum that the government is having difficulty containing it. Recently, for example, an enterprising former editor used a loophole in the law on cooperatives and his backdoor connections with printers and paper suppliers to produce a handsome paperback of writings by Freud, who has been banned in Russia since the 1920s. The books have been confiscated by Goskomizdat bureaucrats, but probably not for long. In February, Viktor Nikonov, a member of the Politburo, reprimanded the producers of *Vzglyad*, currently the hottest television show in the country, for its excessively "sensational material" (their chief sin was to predict that the Kabul regime would fall), and its popular hosts were replaced.

In the old days the result would have been a tamer program. A few weeks later, however, *Vzglyad* was back with a proposal to take Lenin out of the marble mausoleum on Red Square and bury him like an ordinary mortal. Likewise, since January journalists have been required to obtain special passes from the Ministry of Internal Affairs before they can cover "emergencies." But the new rule produced such a storm of protest that the Ministry of Internal Affairs suspended it pending a review, and Soviet journalists have managed to cover the story of police brutality in Georgia.

So the tap of media control leaks a bit. Still, nobody seriously doubts that the leadership could squeeze *glasnost* shut if it really wanted to. (Indeed, in the latest development in the *Vzglyad* affair, the head of the State Television and Radio Committee, Aleksandr Aksenov, has been fired.) But why should they? Why lose Soviet audiences all over again and abandon the battle for public opinion to the BBC, Radio Liberty, and the Moscow rumor mill? After all, as Laqueur points out, czarist experience offers a precedent: a large degree of cultural freedom coexisted very well with authoritarianism.

Still, Laqueur is pessimistic about the permanence of the policy of openness. *Glasnost* simply makes governing more difficult. As problems increase, as tensions mount, the temptation grows to return to the style of the past. Clashes and disorder will "play into the hands of those who were arguing all along that the Soviet people are not ready now, and will perhaps not be ready for generations to come, for political freedom."

Laqueur's argument is based, finally, not on institutions or political calculations, but on political culture, which is his book's main focus. He is unpersuaded by the view of several leading Sovietologists (such as Frederick Starr, Moshe Lewin, Gail Lapidus, and Robert Tucker) that Soviet political culture has changed since Stalin's time. He believes that the only true guarantee of the survival of *glasnost* would be a cultural revolution; and *that* has not occurred. "Cultural revolutions," he writes, "involve not just the replacement of one political elite by another but lasting and radical change in the mentality of a nation." That is not likely to transpire in the Soviet Union anytime soon: "I am not aware of successful cultural revolutions except over a very long time or in the wake of a major disaster such as a war. . . . I do not think that the preconditions for such a revolution exist at present in the Soviet Union." The dominant political culture of the Soviet Union, in Laqueur's view, is not based on Bolshevism, very little of which has rubbed off on the population. It is based on traditional Russian values.

That is why Laqueur throughout his book invokes the Russian past and its links to the present. "Basic instincts do not easily change," he writes. "The Russians never respected and loved democracy as they respected and loved autocracy." Some of the best pages of his book are devoted to the rise of Russian nationalism. Long before Gorbachev came to power, one could see more and more of the values of the pre-revolutionary Russian past re-emerging in the present, including some of the more unsavory ones such as anti-Semitism and anti-Western xenophobia, not to mention hostility toward Eastern Europeans and Soviet non-Russians.

It is not only Russian self-awareness that is re-emerging under the stimulus of *glasnost*, but also that of the non-Russian half of the Soviet population. If there is a significant shortcoming in Laqueur's book, it is that he virtually ignores the non-Russian half of the story (though, in fairness, it is only in recent months that the real dimensions of resurgent non-Russian nationalisms have begun to dawn on Westerners and Russians alike, including Gorbachev himself).

The implication is enormous, especially if one reasons within Laqueur's framework. If it is really true that Bolshevism has left little mark, and that traditional national cultures and religions are re-emerging as the principal basis of political culture, then there is no glue left to keep the Soviet empire together. Either it will disintegrate, or it will be maintained only by the force of Russian arms.

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In the latter case, it is not only *glasnost* that will disappear, but the entire reform movement as well.

Curiously, Laqueur makes no such dire predictions. He seems confident that in the near term the ruling elite will manage to keep the system stable. "They do not want to lose their jobs. They have a vested interest in the existence of the system. They will fight for its survival. They will think of something to provide legitimacy to the system." But what could that "something" be? Since Laqueur acknowledges that Russian nationalism, pure and simple, cannot be the official doctrine of a multinational empire, he concludes that "the party leadership is stuck with Leninism at least for some time to come," even though nobody—at any rate, not the young—believes in it. But it will be a far more conservative Leninism, a retreat to the past.

Yet are political cultures really so slow to change, and must they be based solely on nationality or religion? The deep structures of a culture do indeed change very slowly. But they can support alternative political values, and these can sometimes change very quickly, even within a single generation. One catalyst of change is defeat in war, as the examples of Germany and Japan attest; but there are others, notably economic development, though its effects are unpredictable, depending on whether it produces a broad-based prosperity or heightened inequalities. What is frequently important in politics is not the broad culture of a whole people, but the subcultures embodied in institutions such as bureaucracies, parties, and corporations. Change the institutions and you change these key political subcultures, with sometimes drastic results for the behavior of the political system.

Thus the issue is not whether political cultures change, but what parts of political culture change and why, among what groups, and with what political consequences. This applies especially to the Soviet Union. It would be bold indeed to argue that Soviet economic development has had no effect on political culture, and Laqueur does not: in three generations, as he himself points out, a population of peasants has become an urban middle class. It would also be hard to argue that there have been no shocks. The latest is the Soviet people's widespread shock of realization that the Stalinist formula for growth no longer works, and their deep sense of shame that the Soviet Union is unable to compete either with the West or the Far East. All these realizations have been strengthened by *glasnost*, which is itself a source of further shocks.

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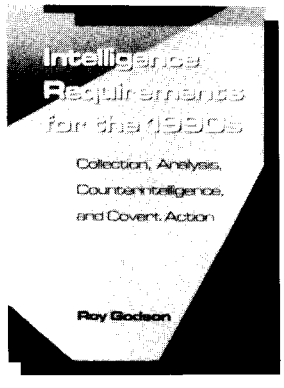

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In sum, there is more of a case to be made for rapid changes in political culture than Laqueur's book allows. But the one question social scientists and Russia-watchers cannot answer is where they will lead. The Soviet system appears headed toward a long, uneasy period in which several different political cultures and political institutions coexist, in which the economy hovers between plan and market, much as in Eastern Europe.

Is there enough glue left to keep the Soviet system together? Are there common values that can provide the basis for a *Soviet* political culture? Can Marxism-Leninism still be made to serve? Laqueur is of two minds: "The fact that the old ideology is no longer believed does not mean that all its parts are discarded; some may have become deeply rooted in the population." And there is some evidence for this: thousands of interviews of recent Soviet émigrés, conducted over the last decade in the United States and Israel, suggest there is a substantial base of support in the Soviet population for some of the regime's most basic norms and policies, such as state-subsidized housing and health delivery, state control of industry, full and secure employment, order, egalitarianism, and predictability. In other words, the people may be bored with Marxism-Leninism, but they cling to the safe (if backward) welfare state that Stalinism created. Despite the undoubted changes in Soviet society—perhaps because of them—there is manifestly a large segment of the population who favors caution, and even retreat.

This leads to a "liberal" case for pessimism about the future of *glasnost*. It goes as follows. The confusion and turmoil inevitable in a time of changing cultures increasingly threaten the safety and livelihood of precisely those urban, educated, "modern" people who should be the logical constituency for change. Change shakes the institutions that these people work in: the Party apparatus, the secret police, the economic bureaucracies, the military, the media. In the abstract, as citizens, these people support *perestroika*. But as Party workers, policemen, soldiers, and the like, they find both their material interests and their ideal interests threatened. Thus, friends and foes of change coexist inside the same bodies.

In such situations, the personality and the strategy of the leader will be crucial. If he wished to, Gorbachev could dismantle the entire network of institutions that maintain the culture of carrot and stick, of censorship and control, just as easily as he has just dismissed one-quarter of the Central Committee's voting membership and slashed the size of the Party apparatus. Laqueur's judgment is that he will not, any more than he will dismantle the centralized welfare state on which the fragile stability of the Soviet system depends. The smart money will agree that in order to preserve that stability, Gorbachev will feel obliged to set limits to *glasnost*, and do many other things that Western public opinion will not like. This may ease the conservatives' dilemmas in the near term and reopen the traditional divide between liberals and conservatives.

Still, after four years of watching Gorbachev, we should not exclude the prospect of even more radical changes. Whenever Gorbachev has faced a choice between pulling back and going forward, in domestic or foreign policies, he has damned the torpedoes and steamed full speed ahead. In the end, it is Gorbachev who is betting that Soviet political culture has changed—or that he can change it.

THANE GUSTAFSON, associate professor of government at Georgetown University, is a specialist on Soviet domestic politics.

The Philosophy of the Oddball

BY RICHARD RORTY

In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism by Stanley Cavell

(University of Chicago Press, 214 pp., $19.95)

Sometimes, in some moods, even the best professorial prose sounds phony. The typical academic's presentation of self—as the humble servant of The Argument or of The Text, faithfully following wherever it may lead—seems defensive and self-deceptive. With growing impatience, one wishes that the author had told us why he or she bothered to write the book in the first place, why *this* seemed a project worth years out of a human life, why the book is more than a move in a game learned in graduate school. "Lord, what would they say / Did their Catullus walk that way?"

Nobody can bring that sort of complaint against Stanley Cavell's new book. Cavell is among professors of philosophy what Harold Bloom is among the professors of English: the least defended, the gutsiest, the most vulnerable. He sticks his neck out farther than any of the rest of us. Who touches this book touches a fleshly, ambitious, anxious, self-involved, self-doubting mortal. Even readers who eventually get annoyed with the book's quirkiness, its unashamedly personal tone, will have to concede its entire honesty and thorough self-awareness. They will have to admit that when Cavell becomes querulous or fey, he knows quite well what is happening. When he is allusive, he alludes to what moves him, not to what he thinks will impress us.

Speaking of allusion: at the beginning of one chapter, Cavell says that he "will attempt to fit together into some reasonable, or say convivial, circle a collection of the main beasts in my jungle or wilderness of interests." This explanation of what he is doing is frank and accurate. His book is neither argument nor exegesis, but simply an attempt to have the new friends meet the old. What the allusions add is the hope that we will realize that Cavell realizes that some of these beasts may be as cruelly imaginary as the one in Henry James's story. He may also hope that we realize that he realizes that his invocation, like Jacques's in Arden, may have called some fools into his circle.

This is not to say that the writers Cavell mentions most—Shakespeare, Kant, Coleridge, Emerson, Thoreau, Poe, Freud, Heidegger, Wittgenstein, J. L. Austin—might turn out to be fools. The danger Cavell quite consciously runs is rather that, like anyone daring to call such people together, he may have unwittingly substituted foolish little silhouettes for the men themselves. Sometimes, when we think that we are rediscovering the mighty dead, we are just inventing imaginary playmates. This danger is extreme for us philosophers, for we are constantly tempted to trim all books down to the size of philosophy books. We are always making non-philosophers answer funny little philosophical questions. We even make people like Shakespeare and Emerson

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give answers to questions set by J. L. Austin.

Who? John Langshaw Austin was Cavell's teacher. The hero and leader of a now almost forgotten school called "ordinary language philosophy," Austin's habitat was the common rooms and seminar rooms of Oxford. These rooms were, before Oxford went coed, much like boys' locker rooms. There intellectual athletes snapped out counterexamples, a continuation of towel-snapping by other means. Austin succeeded in displacing the previous prefect, A. J. Ayer, by showing that Ayer's (and thus some of Descartes's and Kant's) problems could only be stated in a particular jargon, in Philosopher's Talk. They cannot arise if we speak Ordinary Language.

Descartes and Ayer had discussed, for example, whether the external world was real. Real? Austin asked. As opposed to what? A plywood stage set? A hallucination? A computer simulation? In the ordinary, human world these are the sorts of alternatives that give the word "real" its use and its force. In the philosophers' world, there is nothing to do the same job. That is what Wittgenstein meant when he said that Philosopher's Talk is language "on holiday."

Austin hoped to reimpress us with the truth of the old saw that philosophers kick up dust and then complain that they cannot see. But Austin did not press the further questions that fascinate Cavell: What compels them to kick up all that dust? Why do they want to talk so funny? Why are they not content to be, and speak, Ordinary? Why do they refuse to acknowledge the ordinary, human world? These questions amount to: Why do philosophers go in for skepticism? Why do they ask whether the table is really there, whether you might turn out to be a robot, whether you see what I see when we simultaneously remark the deep vermilion in the rose?

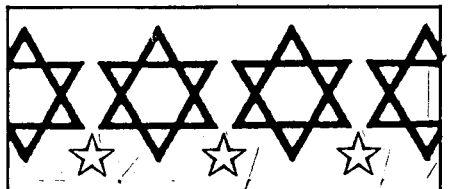
If one is not satisfied with the answer "It's all they know how to do: they were taught to ask these questions in graduate school," one will have to find some deeper significance in philosophical, Descartes-like skepticism (as opposed to practical, Montaigne-like skepticism). Finding such significance has been Cavell's lifework, the central project of all his books.

The books have gotten better and better, more persuasive and more moving, as Cavell has gone along. Ten years ago, in *The Claim of Reason*, he tried too hard to get us interested in Austin, and in the piquant examples over which Austin and Ayer haggled. His effort in that book to formulate a "problematic of skepticism and tragedy" never quite came off. This was because he spent too much time on topics that only a philosophy professor could love—straining to find tragic import in what persisted in seeming mere classroom exercises. In his recent books, notably *In Quest of the Ordinary* and *This New But Unapproachable America*, he tries the non-philosopher's patience less. We hear less of Austin and more of Wittgenstein.

So we should. Cavell's references to "Wittgenstein and Austin on the ordinary" yoke greatness with charm (as in "Proust and Beerbohm on dukes" or "George Eliot and Dorothy Sayers on the situation of women"). Unhitched from Austin, Wittgenstein is the sort of philosopher one would not be ashamed to introduce to Emerson. For Wittgenstein did not go to graduate school and did not hang around common rooms. He had little life apart from his philosophical obsessions. When Bertrand Russell asked him whether he was thinking about logic or about his sins, he replied "both."

Wittgenstein was not an ordinary language philosopher, nor even a philosopher whose main interest was language. His early work was an attempt to justify his withdrawal from the ordinary patterns of human interchange by claiming that everything that can be said in language—all descriptions of what is the case—was "without value." Wittgenstein wanted "to feel the world as a limited whole"—to rise above the petty, the banal, the kitschy, by seeing the merely communicable as irrelevant to "the problem of life." The people the young Wittgenstein admired were those who had passed beyond language, those who, as he said, "have found after a long period of doubt that the sense of life became clear to them [but] have then been unable to say what constituted that sense."

But the later Wittgenstein, in one of the great peripities in the history of philosophy, renounced incommunicability and accepted ordinariness. He became content to think that he himself—all of him, through and through—might be susceptible to linguistic description, intelligible to his fellow humans. His later work mocked his earlier distinction between the sacredly ineffable and the banally sayable. Why, he comes to ask himself, did I think that logic—the outmost frontier of language, looming over the abyss beyond—was something sublime? Or even if it were, what is the sublime to me? Why did I hope that there was something like a "limited whole" to be felt? Why did I think that language had limits,



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that there was a single problem called "the problem of life," that to grasp that problem one must teeter over an abyss? Not, he concluded, because deep philosophical researches showed such limits to exist, but because an ascetic, obsessively self-purificatory attitude toward ordinary human life had demanded that there be such limits, such a problem, and such an abyss.

Wittgenstein's renunciation of the quest for purity, his acceptance of the unimportance of sublimity, is Cavell's great example of the "recovery of the human." But this example is obscured by Cavell's insistence on drawing an analogy between what Wittgenstein called "forms of life"—ordinary social practices, ordinary contexts for the occurrence of words—and Kant's "transcendental logic." Cavell seems to think that this analogy underlines the importance of Wittgenstein's achievement by placing it within the tradition of finding what Kant called "conditions of possibility" (the specifically philosophical project, as opposed to the natural scientist's project of finding conditions of actuality). But that tradition is one of the things that the later Wittgenstein wanted to sidestep. Kant's array of "categories of the pure understanding" is a good example of the sort of scientistic pseudo-rigor of which Wittgenstein rightly became suspicious.

Moreover, the distinctiveness of Wittgenstein's early quest for purity (a quest that had a lot to do with Wittgenstein's self-loathing, and with his inability to form lasting bonds with other human beings) is obscured by assimilating it to the textbook "problems of philosophy"—for example, to "the problem of the external world" set by Descartes and Kant. Such an assimilation suggests that the latter problem played the same role in the lives of these men as Wittgenstein's philosophical obsessions played in his. But Wittgenstein's was not a possible life until relatively recent times—until philosophy had detached itself from such matters of ordinary human concern as politics, religion, and science, and had become either a lonely academic ritual or a private spiritual exercise. This detachment, though foreshadowed and made possible by their work, was not realized in the lives of Kant (who was caught up in a utopian political vision) or Descartes (who was caught up in a scientific revolution).

Cavell has a much better chance of conviviality when he introduces Wittgenstein to Emerson than when he introduces him to Kant. He is on to something real and important when he says that "Emerson and Thoreau . . . underwrite Wittgenstein and Austin." He thinks of this underwriting as "romanticism" helping us to recover from "skepticism." On Cavell's definition, the philosopher's textbook problems about "the external world" and "other minds" are to be taken seriously because the frenzied dust-kicking that makes them seem urgent is a symptom of a "drive to the inhuman"—the drive that took Wittgenstein out toward his fancied abyss. The "recovery of the human" is his name for what the later Wittgenstein and Emerson achieved. It is a good name, and bringing the two men together helps.

Cavell's choice of isms, however, confuses things. To most of the philosophers who still take traditional epistemological and metaphysical problems at face value (to Saul Kripke, for example), the later Wittgenstein's willingness to say that when we reach a "form of life" we reach rock bottom seems just another version of Cartesian skepticism. So identifying Wittgenstein's renunciation of his quest for purity as a return from skepticism seems a needlessly controversial complication. More important, to most fans of the Romantic poets (especially to Bloomians, who hope to learn from those poets how to give birth to themselves), a good half of what Cavell calls "romanticism" looks more like pastoralism.

Cavell says that

> romanticism's work here interprets itself, so I have suggested, as the task of bringing the world back, as to life. This may, in turn, present itself as the quest for a return to the ordinary, or of it, a new creation of our habitat; or as the quest, away from that, for the creation of a new habitation: Wordsworth and Coleridge would represent the former alternative; Blake and [Mary] Shelley, I believe, the latter.

In order to pursue his theme of "the return to the human" Cavell sticks mainly to the former, pastoralist, as opposed to the latter, Promethean, alternative. But that shows the limitations of that theme. What is left of romanticism after we set aside the Bloomian quest for the creation of a new, self-made habitation (and thus a new, self-born self) seems insufficiently romantic. When Cavell pitches his theme of "the return to the ordinary" to Austin's remark that the skeptical philosopher "thrusts himself out of the garden of the world we live in," the Promethean side of romanticism gets lost. So Cavell is sometimes tempted to teleport Emerson back into the 18th century (when, as Nabokov remarks, "the lambs were fleecier, the brooks purlier") rather than forward to Nietzsche, his self-proclaimed disciple.

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But sometimes—much more often in this book than in his earlier books, but perhaps still not often enough—Cavell puts isms and textbook philosophical problems to one side. Then he lets the members of his circle talk to one another without trying to pin labels ("philosopher" or "literary artist") on them, and without arranging conversational groupings ("the skeptics," "the romantics"). At these times he is much more persuasive. He ties himself and his prose up into fewer knots.

The clearest and best chapter of *In Quest of the Ordinary* is the meditation on egoism called "Being Odd, Getting Even." There he heads straight into the center of Harold Bloom's territory, describing

> Emerson's progress as his having posed Descartes's question for himself and provided a fresh line of answer, one you might call a grammatical answer: I am a being who to exist must say I exist, or must acknowledge my existence—claim it, stake it, enact it.

This Promethean need to enact one's own existence, to invent a self rather than to play out a role embedded in ordinary forms of life, is what makes odd people stop speaking Ordinary. It is what is odd about them, why the ordinary isn't good enough for them. So these people will eventually share Wittgenstein's need to return to the ordinary and recover the human: recover all those ways of being human that set their oddness off, make up the stage set against which they enacted their uniqueness. Their problem will then be to acknowledge this stage set as more than just a stage set, their fellow humans as more than trampolines to bounce off. Insofar as they fail to do this, they run the danger of winding up where Nietzsche and Heidegger wound up, of seeing the ordinary life of the ordinary person as a failure to be fully human, rather than merely a failure to be sufficiently odd.

Surely Cavell is right in suggesting that, if there is anything behind the philosopher's dust-kicking except childish showing off (encouraged by graduate school training)—if there is anything to Cartesian skepticism except adolescent one-upmanship—it must have some connection with the Promethean urge to enact and to re-create oneself. Goodwill requires us to posit such an urge behind Ayer's "logical construction of the external world," behind Kant's funny-looking "transcendental logic," as well as behind Descartes's willingness to invoke demons. By positing this urge, we can make sense of the fact that philosophy continued to exist even after purifying itself of human interest, of how it managed to go private without (quite) going crazy.

The examples of Nietzsche and Heidegger help one see the point of Cavell's claim that the danger of self-enactment is the inability to acknowledge others. The price Heidegger paid for being odd was to become as cruel as Lear, and Nietzsche eventually went as mad. The conflict that Cavell splendidly dramatizes at his best, and fuzzes up with philosophical isms at his worst, is between the fact that life is hardly worth living without oddity and egoism, yet also hardly worth living without love and communion.

This conflict has hardly gone unnoticed, but Cavell gives us a new way of understanding it by using philosophers as illustrations. For we philosophers are perhaps the most vivid examples of the oddball's ability to get even by making everybody else seem, at least for a moment, out of it. By inventing a new vocabulary of praise and blame, by assuming a new (preferably "transcendental") standpoint, we can sometimes make it appear that everybody except ourselves simply doesn't understand what is going on. We can make them feel that they are stuck on a lower plane of being, living down in a cave. By wrapping ourselves in this new vocabulary, and refusing to speak Ordinary, we can sometimes make ourselves look and sound like gods.

Cruelty and madness are likely to ensue when we start looking like gods to ourselves, when we start thinking that our new standpoint puts us above and beyond the ordinary, that we are able to look down on it, to see it as the "limited whole" of the young Wittgenstein's fantasies, to look back on it as Heidegger tried to look back on "the West" or Foucault on "man." Cruelty and madness will be avoided just insofar as we remember that our new vocabulary is entirely parasitic on the one we learned as children, that our brief divinity is a dramatic role that presupposes a lot of communal stage-building and ticket-buying.

Cavell never forgets these banal facts, yet he never fails in sympathy for the oddball. His prose and his career both live out the conflict of which he writes. In the course of that career he has developed an increasingly distinctive and powerful mode of self-enactment. Emerson would have found Cavell as convivial as he would have found Wittgenstein.

RICHARD RORTY's most recent book is *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (Cambridge University Press).

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Mistresses of Time

BY LAWRENCE LIPKING

Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Verse edited by Germaine Greer, Susan Hastings, Jeslyn Medoff, Melinda Sansone

(Noonday, 477 pp., $29.95; $13.95 paper)

Wines of Great Britain. Chicago Republicans. The New Broadway Musical. Seventeenth-century Women's Verse. None of these is nonexistent, exactly. Some connoisseurs will go to great lengths to collect and savor the odd Stragglethorpe Hall sherry or Ed Vrdolyak. But do they rate a fat book, stuffed with scholarly fine print?

Not long ago it would have seemed highly unlikely. Now tastes have changed. *Kissing the Rod* is only one among several recent works that strive to put 17th-century women back into history or to rewrite literary history around them. Nor is it intended primarily for connoisseurs. Katherine Philips does turn a nifty phrase, Aphra Behn bows to no man in contests of wit, Anne Bradstreet is the mother of American poetry; each of them belongs to the elite. Yet here they share their space with almost 50 other women, not all of whom can count. This book is committed to a policy of no discrimination. Like archaeologists who dig up a forgotten city, its editors seem driven less by the search for masterpieces than by the sheer thrill of discovery. They prefer the manuscript to the printed poem, the stubborn individual voice to the polished career. They want us to know how many women writers once existed.

The urgency of this project, its effort to save lives as well as poems, characterizes much current work in women's studies and literary studies. Sixty years ago Virginia Woolf took up a different project. When she brooded on women writers, it was to explain an absence: Why had there not been more of them, why had they not written better? She found some excellent reasons. Not even Shakespeare, had he been born a woman, could have made a name; lack of encouragement and education would have baffled him/her from the start, and at last a vicious double standard would have dragged the wretch down. Woolf imagines the impossible situation of Shakespeare's sister in order to imagine the conditions that might allow a great woman writer to flourish in the future. She sets her standards high, for nothing but the best.

But later critics have tended to ask another sort of question, which regards not the absence but the presence of women as the fact to be explained. How do so many women manage to write? Why do we not know them better? Like Woolf, such critics ground their answers on the conspiracy of silence that has smothered writers from the wrong gender or class. Yet the tragedy of unwritten masterpieces moves them much less than the courage of women who built a corner for themselves in somebody else's room. If literary history has ignored them, then perhaps what needs to be revised is the idea of literature itself. The masculine noun that lurks within the "masterpiece" suggests that women writers might always have done well to choose some other goal. Before we judge these women, we had better know where they came from and who they were.

Kissing the Rod has a passion for just this kind of knowledge. It is packed with details of births and deaths and family fortunes and political and religious attachments, the scattered records of lives often spent in exile or obscurity. Sometimes the flood of annotation can overwhelm a thin trickle of verse. That does not seem unfair to the prophetess Anna Trapnel, whose role in the Fifth Monarchist agitation against Cromwell is ten times as interesting, and merits ten times as many words, as a scrap of her song. But better poets suffer from this treatment. Bradstreet, for instance, is introduced with four snippets from longer works; other bits (including the opening of the famous "Prologue") are consigned to the notes.

At times the verse seems merely an excuse for antiquarian printouts. Some readers will yearn for more poems and less apparatus. Nor do the relentlessly unmodernized texts ("Upon ane day as I did mourne full soir, / With sindrie things quhairwith my saull was greifit") invite outsiders in. On the other hand, the craving for ever more information can be infectious. Just who was "Ephelia"? Since she—if she *was* a she—was a writer of talent as well as an enigma, inquiring readers will want to know, and some of them may even join in the search. Those are the readers this anthology aims for. It seems to view poetry less as an end in itself than as a thread that leads back to the reality of some women's lives, and it fingers every clue. Possible sisters wait back there in the past.

A different notion of poetry waits there, too. Germaine Greer's introduction bristles with irony about "our post-romantic awe of poets," with its aura of mystery and male privilege. Though she views women writers as *guerrilleras* "who tried to storm the highest bastion of the cultural establishment, the citadel of 'sacred poetry,' " that castle in the air has no real substance for her. Seventeenth-century poets, she insists, were less high-minded. "The poet's job was, not to express his own ideas or fantasies, but to write to order, celebrating the births, deaths, marriages, and coronations of the ruling class, much today as an advertising copywriter sings the praises of Guinness and Coca-Cola." Perhaps this underestimates the ambition of "Lycidas" or Donne's *Anniversaries*. Greer likes to bring those giants down to earth. Perrier water flows from her Pierian Spring.

But the anthology itself supplies a better view of poetry by women. They did not write commercials nor, for the most part, did they write to toady to the great, impress the public, or storm any bastions. Instead most women tried to mark the time, to save a few moments from oblivion and fasten them down. This motive is especially poignant in one genre that women had all too many chances to practice: verses on the death of a child. There are many such poems in this book. The three by Mary Carey all present variations on the same theme, her specialty. (I have modernized the spelling and punctuation.)

> What birth is this, a poor despised creature?
> A little embryo, void of life and feature. . . .
> As limners draw dead shades for to set forth
> their lively colors, & their picture's worth,
> So doth my God, in this, as all things, wise,
> by my dead formless babe teach me to prize
> My living pretty pair, Nat & Bethia,
> the children dear, God yet lends to Maria.

Carey preserves a keepsake of the little

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abortive life that passed so quickly, and she also finds consolation: "It is in Christ; he's mine, and I am his;/this union is my only happiness." Verse like this does not invite criticism. It serves as a personal marker, a prompting of faith, a sketch in a family album, a form imposed on something otherwise formless. Even the title restricts it to one particular moment, "Upon the Sight of my abortive Birth the 31th of December 1657," and it does not pretend to make any claim on the future. Being itself is its only reason for being.

A majority of the poems in this book have a similar function. They draw a circle around a brief instant when something out of the ordinary happened, they keep a special day or two alive. Thus Aemilia Lanyer's artful "Description of Cooke-ham" hallows the country house where she once visited the Countess of Cumberland. That was a classy vacation. Already the summer has faded into fall; the sadness of departure throws a shadow over the landscape as well as the memory:

> The house cast off each garment that might grace it,
> Putting on dust and cobwebs to deface it.
> All desolation then there did appear,
> When you were going whom they held so dear.

The bread-and-butter note achieves its apotheosis. But the verse not only talks about passing the time; it shows us how to do it right, in regularity and order. Lanyer prolongs the short season she spent among "great friends" by constantly repeating it. Those few hours mattered; they had the shape of a poem.

It is as if verse were a sort of calendar, reminding women not to let the days go by without observance—a period, a season in the sun, nine months, threescore and ten, or often a leaf ripped prematurely from the wall. From this point of view the association of poetry with numbers, a discipline in learning how to keep time and count, marks a whole way of life. Those who cannot read the face of a clock are doomed to the continuous present of limbo—where most people, especially women, have always resided. Poetry gives them a way of looking forward and back, and puts them into history. The versifier lives no longer in all time, but in an age.

What does this collection have to tell us about these women and the age in which they lived? To begin with, it shows that they were in plenty of trouble. Despite their well-publicized devotion to peace, retirement, and domestic happiness, few women writers escaped the bitter political and religious traumas of their century. One might attribute this partly to their eminence. Even among the nobility, educated women stood out, and others who wrote were likely to have been taught in the name of a cause (usually religious). It is not surprising that many of these prodigies should have been touched by the widening ripples of civil war. Katherine Philips was a gentle person who liked to celebrate the joys of friendship, but her Royalist sympathies conflicted with the Puritanism of her family and her husband. He lost his property and almost his life at the Restoration; she died of smallpox at 32. Seventeenth-century poets wrote about retreats more often than they found them.

Moreover, the act of writing itself set a woman apart. Her command of language could never be neutral. By selecting a certain class of words, an ideal scenery, or a form of prayer, she signed up with one party or another, exposing herself to the enemy. Retribution often followed. A collective biography of these writers would trace a history of the century, with special emphasis not on heroes but on victims.

Not many were rebels, however. The title and introduction of *Kissing the Rod* present a mocking emblem of discipline and sexual bondage. When the male establishment wields its rod, "women have always been obliged for their own survival to humble themselves before it, and to flatter it." Greer stresses the damage that women suffered from their self-abasement; she even includes herself among the victims. Yet this reaction, however understandable, imposes a modern attitude on writers who were only too grateful to have the chance of submitting to the regimen of education or the conventions of verse. Smart women know how to use male instruments for their own ends.

Thus 17th-century women writers converted the lines of Spenser, Cowley, Dryden, and even Rochester—masculine swagger itself—to the more companionable forms of a lady. When Rochester's niece, Anne Wharton, wrote verses to praise Aphra Behn's elegy for the dead disreputable poet, the highest compliment Behn could offer in return was to imagine Wharton as her uncle in heavenly drag:

> The mighty soul of *Rochester's* revived;
> Enough kind Heaven! to purpose I have lived.
> I saw the lovely *phantom*, no disguise
> Veiled the blest vision from my eyes;
> 'Twas all o'er *Rochester* that pleased and did surprise.

Purified of anything too earthy, the earl comes back in a new and improved—a feminine—edition.

We might like to think that such women were being subversive. But in fact

A Short Walk in the Garden

(after Ashbery)

My, but this covert of trees is homely and large.
Exactly, what kind of fertilizer did
they use to grow such things amid
the rather delightful, sensible couloir
of the mountain? And shapes, those shapes! Why did they
pattern the oak as a pyramid, the birch
as a sycamore, and the sycamore as a birch?
Each moves in the wind as if performing. Pray,
tell me why, trees, why on some nights you sing,
on others mumble, and now when questioned, are
wordless and mute? Some trees, to try our
sanity, our patience, and our sympathy.
Yet, why am I dazzled by their display,
their theater? Does being bring us to obey?

C. F. Pinkerton

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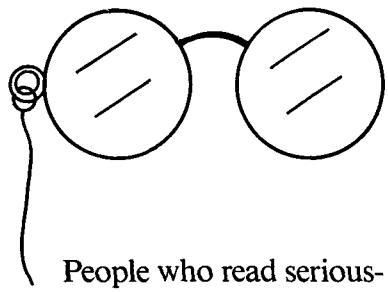

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they seem thoroughly embedded in their culture and its clans. Even the lively feminist outburst at the end of the century conforms to an ideal of duty. Hence, when Jane Barker chooses "A Virgin life" rather than "fall into the power / Of man's almost omnipotent amour," she dedicates her life to serving other people,

> And by obedience testifies she can
> Be's good a subject as the stoutest man.

This woman prides herself on being a subject.

Nor are such poets under any illusion that they have created themselves. Seventeenth-century women writers need to be nurtured. They kiss the rod not only of men but of mothers and aunts, and clear a little space in history for their own kind. Most of them live in small worlds that revolve around one or two attractive figures, a system with stars and satellites. These circles cast their spell from one generation to the next. Elizabeth, Queen of Bohemia, did not leave much verse of her own, but her taste for letters inspired many later women (including Katherine Philips) to think they might be writers. After the Restoration, Aphra Behn's daring prompted others to take up pens and pen names of their own; and by the end of the century, when a league of female playwrights opened six plays in one season, they capped each other's work with prologues and puffs.

Such writers have little to do with that Great Tradition where Dante talks only to Milton and Milton talks only to God. Women listen better. Good literature, as they perceive it, may not be so different from the very best gossip, and tradition itself may be nothing but a clique that has lasted a long time. Wordsworth defined the poet as "a man speaking to men." Not many readers believe that Wordsworth, in his poems, is speaking to them. But in this book we do hear women speaking to women.

It is a book to sample, not to read through. Some users will find it unfriendly. In order to include so many poets and so much information, the editors have been forced to cut some longer poems to pieces. By restricting the period arbitrarily to one century, they exclude important figures at the beginning (the Countess of Pembroke) and the end (the Countess of Winchilsea), and chop off the career of Elizabeth Singer (Rowe) in the middle. Nor do they seem much concerned with distinguishing major work from minor—or *very* minor. Elizabeth Egerton, Countess of Bridgewater, mourns her dead son in rudimentary verse—"Here lies a boy the finest child from me / Which makes my heart & soul sigh for to see"—while Katherine Philips, even in grief for a boy of her own, remains a gifted poet: "What on earth deserves our trust? / Youth and beauty both are dust. / Long we gathering are with pain / What one moment calls again." But here the two women are equal sisters in sorrow. This anthology does not aim to choose between them, or to make a new canon. Yet the modesty of many of these writers, all crammed together, is also part of their charm. Nobodies deserve attention, too. There is something very refreshing about their indifference to fame, their mutual admiration, their decency. The meek shall also inherit the kingdom of verse.

One of the most learned and skillful poets in this book is Lucy Hutchinson, who viewed poetry in general, and her own poems in particular, with puritanical disdain. She did not publish; she did not want to shine:

> Ambition doth incessantly aspire,
> And each advance leads on to new desire; . . .
> And he alone possesseth true delight
> Whose spotless soul no guilty fears affright.

Writers who want to be spotless seldom write much. Hutchinson wrote only for family and friends, and was not proud of what she had done. Moreover, even when she undertook her most ambitious work, a translation of *De rerum natura*, it was not in a room of her own. "I turned it into English in a roome where my children practizd the severall quallities they were taught, with their Tutors, & I numbred the sillables of my translation by the threds of the canvas I wrought in, & sett them downe with a pen & inke that stood by me."

Under the circumstances we might not expect a lot; Lucretius's Latin is hard. Yet evidently a woman can work quite well in somebody else's room, for the English makes good sense and is sharply pointed. Lucy Hutchinson does not claim to be a great poet. Her work has the rhythm of daily life, and is nothing exceptional; it did not *have* to be written. But the ease and intelligence of such verse can be satisfying, like the quiet voice of a friend. These poems are not meant to impress us, but to tell something that we need to learn, as well as to remind us that such a person once existed. She is still worth getting to know.

LAWRENCE LIPKING is the author of *Abandoned Women and Poetic Tradition* (University of Chicago Press).

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The Compleat Critic

By Denis Donoghue

I. A. Richards: His Life and Work by John Paul Russo

(Johns Hopkins University Press, 864 pp., $39.95)

Does anyone read I. A. Richards? I doubt it. When I refer to him in the course of teaching classes, the reference elicits either polite blankness or the mildest antiquarian interest. One of the reasons John Paul Russo's biography of Richards is so long is that he has felt impelled to resuscitate past contexts and to direct interest, however belated, to a man of extraordinarily diverse capacities.

Ivor Armstrong Richards was born in Sandbach, Cheshire, on February 26, 1893; he died in Cambridge (the English one) on September 7, 1979. He lived, by my count, four lives: a first in the study of language and literature; a second in the attempt to spread the brief gospel that he and C. K. Ogden called Basic English; a third in the attempt to put his theory of language-teaching at the service of governments, nations, communities at large; and a fourth in personal communications with his wife, Dorothea, his companion in mountaineering, travel (to China, mostly), and domestic felicity.

The heyday of Richards's reputation is represented by the publication of his *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), *Science and Poetry* (1926), *Practical Criticism* (1929), *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934), and *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (1936). During those years he was one of the three or four critics writing in English who was most talked about and argued over. What he wrote about poetry, meaning, belief, value, sincerity, communication, tone, irony, ambiguity, and tragedy provided the terms of reference for nearly everyone's consideration of these issues. Take, for instance, the question (if it is still a question) of literature and belief. Like Arnold, Richards took it for granted that religion, specifically Christianity, had failed, that it had been brought down by Darwinian science. What Richards called the magical view of the universe was now replaced by the scientific view. If some writers, notably Lawrence and Yeats, still held to the magical view, so much the worse for them.

Like Arnold, too, Richards thought that poetry was fully capable of saving us, because it could respond to our feelings and inspire a satisfactory degree of coherence among them. A great poem is a structure that organizes a large number of impulses, and brings them into equilibrium: reading such a poem is the experience, justly exhilarating, of witnessing the achievement. We see how impulses, in themselves so different as to bring the organism to a halt if left to their warring devices, are reconciled in the poem. The "interinanimation of the words" corresponds to the complex relation between our many impulses, developed into coherence and complementarity.

The model for this achievement is the central nervous system, described most persuasively for Richards by the neurophysiologist C. S. Sherrington in his *Integrative Action of the Nervous System* (1906). "With the nervous system intact," as Sherrington said, "the reactions of the various parts of that system, the 'simple reflexes,' are ever combined into great unitary harmonies, actions which in their sequence one upon another constitute 'behavior.'" A poem, in Richards's terms, is "a collection of impulses" brought, by the forces of diction, rhythm, grammar, and syntax, to the highest possible degree of equipoise, an "equilibrium of opposed impulses."

The point of this activity is self-evident: if you can see it happening in a poem, you know it can be done. Even if you can't write a poem, you are encouraged to believe that you can cope with your impulses without having to suppress them. Richards's pupil William Empson put the matter clearly in *Seven Types of Ambiguity*. "The object of life, after all, is not to understand things, but to maintain one's defenses and equilibrium and live as well as one can; it is not only maiden aunts who are placed like this." The problem is that you have to do this while living: "It does not even satisfy the understanding to stop living in order to understand."

The bearing of this on the question of poetry and belief drove Richards to distinguish, in *Principles of Literary Criticism*, between "scientific belief" and "emotive

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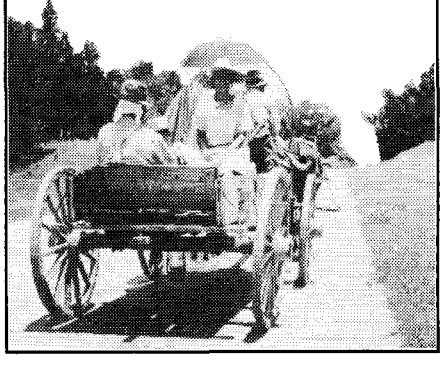

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belief." Scientific belief "we may perhaps define as readiness to act as though the reference symbolized by the proposition which is believed were true." Emotive belief is a far more provisional relation of attitudes and feelings. It is not a belief that such and such is the case, but that "if things were such and such, then . . ." In literature, music, and architecture, "attitudes are evoked and developed which are unquestionably independent of all beliefs as to fact." Eliot's *The Waste Land*, for instance, contains many ideas, but the poetry of the poem does not depend on the truth of the ideas. "The ideas," according to Richards, "are of all kinds, abstract and concrete, general and particular, and, like the musician's phrases, they are arranged, not that they may tell us something, but that their effects in us may combine into a coherent whole of feeling and attitude and produce a peculiar liberation of the will." Richards congratulated Eliot, in effect, on achieving in *The Waste Land* a complete severance between his poetry and all beliefs.

Predictably, Eliot didn't thank Richards for the compliment. He claimed, in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, that insofar as he thought Richards's statement understandable (and he said that he himself didn't understand what Richards was saying), he was convinced that it was erroneous. It seems to me that Richards was merely saying that when you're reading a poem or listening to a symphony, you shouldn't let your system of belief intrude. The value of reading a poem is that you are encouraged to think that your feelings needn't be a mess. Eliot, of course, wasn't persuaded by any of this. How could he be, since he believed that "the chief distinction of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever"? In reply to Richards's assertion that poetry is capable of saving us, Eliot said that this is "like saying that the wallpaper will save us when the walls have crumbled."

But I should not give the impression that Richards simply adopted a Sherringtonian position and stuck to it. One of the problems in dealing with him is that he submitted his mind to so many philosophically disparate influences that it is virtually impossible to hold him to anything. There are traces in his work of McTaggart, G. E. Moore, Plato, Russell, Wittgenstein, Bohr, Coleridge, Shelley, William James, and the behaviorist J. B. Watson, so that the only coherence is a sequential or narrative one, as Russo shows. "I just translated Shelley into Sherrington," Richards said in 1970; but that was just a way of putting it.

He changed his mind more often than he should have if he wanted to convince his readers. He should have known, especially in his later years, that to gain influence in the middle of the 20th century you have to settle on one statement, small or large, and spend your life repeating it. If, like Richards, you have many different things to say, you can't be labeled. We live in a society that is gratified to feel that it has at least one exemplar of every conceivable notion. We like to have lots of them, and to give each one a label. Otherwise we become sad hearts at the supermarket. The merit, never mind the truth, of any of these notions is a minor consideration.

Richards left Cambridge in 1939 and came to Harvard, supposedly to develop ideas of general bearing on education, literacy, communication. His mind was full of Ogden's Basic English, a system of 850 words that, he thought, would enable the whole world to communicate. With a simplified grammar, 16 verbs would be enough, with 20 prepositions, 150 adjectives, and 600 nouns. Only 337 of the 850 words had more than one syllable. Richards was totally committed to it, and tried to establish it in China and Africa.

For a few years, it seemed to go well, but it was soon associated with British imperialism. On the breakup of the Empire after World War II and the independence of India, Basic started losing its appeal. When Churchill endorsed it, in a speech at Harvard on September 6, 1943, Richards knew that it would always be thought of as an imperialist device. But he soldiered on with it, and kept it going. In the end, or at least in one disgruntled moment, he thought Basic to be "the perpetual poison of my existence." But for the most part he persuaded himself that, like radio, tape recording, and television, it would help bring the whole world into equilibrium. In 1968 he published these visions as *Design for Escape: World Education through Modern Media*.

Much of this effort now seems a waste of time and spirit. Not that there wasn't a job to be done, but Richards wasn't the right man to do it. Russo follows him with heavy heart through the later years, reporting one disappointment after another. He thinks that Richards should have stuck to what he was good at, and left the large schemes to lesser men. No wonder he keeps coming back to the early years, and to his first glowing success in *Practical Criticism*.

In 1925 Richards handed out eight unidentified poems to 120 undergraduate students and a few friends at Cambridge, and asked for written accounts of the poems a week later. The students were

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evenly distributed between male and female and identified only by numbers. The poems included good, bad, and mediocre work. Richards collected about 1,000 commentaries, of which 387 were included in whole or in part in his study of them, *Practical Criticism*. He approved of about 30, and found the rest in one degree or another unsatisfactory. It was clear that most of the students could not read, failed to grasp the meaning of whole passages, could not offer a rational account of the poems. *Practical Criticism*, in which Richards examined the documents and offered to explain the pervasive failure to read, had an immediate and lasting impact: it was the most irrefutable argument for teaching close reading, the basis of the American New Criticism as developed by John Crowe Ransom, Allen Tate, Cleanth Brooks, and Robert Penn Warren, Kenneth Burke, and R. P. Blackmur. At Cambridge, an examination in Practical Criticism is still obligatory for the Tripos. At least that part of Richards's work is officially acknowledged.

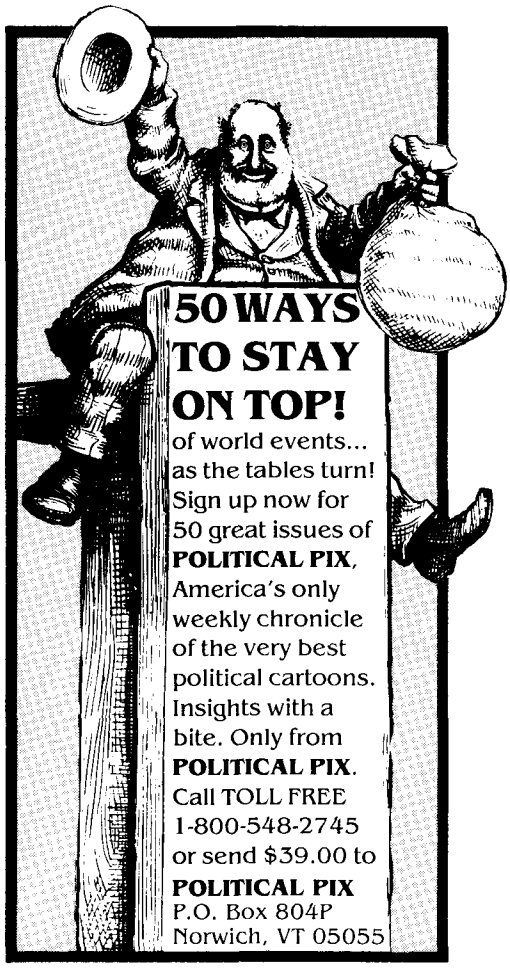
Among English critics, Empson was Richards's most brilliant disciple, and virtually his only one. In fact, Richards's books were shabbily treated, for the most part, by his English contemporaries, especially by F. R. Leavis, who praised them in cursory terms to begin with, and soon attacked them. The ground of the attack was that Leavis regarded Richards's version of close reading as an inert procedure, the mere reception of a message contained in a poem. He was also exasperated by Richards's ostensibly scientific claims, by the offer of Basic English to foreigners who had no feeling for the values embodied in the language and literature of England, and finally by what Leavis regarded as the mechanistic or neo-Benthamite ambition in Richards's entire work. Over the years Leavis published several attacks on Richards in his magazine *Scrutiny*, notably one by D. W. Harding that Leavis undoubtedly instigated. The fact is that Leavis was a far more aggressive campaigner than Richards. He had a point of view that he enforced on every possible occasion. Richards was willing to explain and to defend himself, but after a while he lost interest in defending his corner and set out on a journey toward new interests, mostly in China.

But Leavis was not the only opponent. Marxist critics, including Raymond Williams, said that Richards offered his readers a merely individual salvation through poetry, and that such salvation did not recognize the need for social and political action. Richards knew that people were unhappy, but he thought that their unhappiness was caused by a maladjustment of their impulses. Paraphrasing John Fekete's *The Critical Twilight*, Russo says that "by internalizing conflict, and by making works of art the very models for doing so, Richards removed the problems of order and unity—by right, social, historical, and political problems—from the realm of political action and confined them to education (where they belong too, but not exclusively)." Speaking then in his own voice, Russo concedes that Richards's social theory "presupposes the continued existence of autonomous subjects capable of self-realization."

It is unclear to me whether or not Russo agrees with the Marxist argument against Richards. I hope he doesn't. Richards started from the obvious fact that reading is a solo performance. Reading a novel is like practicing the violin: you have to use your own fingers. It is not like going to a football game or a rock concert. If I'm a Cambridge undergraduate and I can't read, my disability will not be remedied by a change in public life or by new social and political conditions. Richards was fully justified, therefore, in looking to neurophysiology and to individual psychology to help him understand the students and their inability to read. He was also justified in thinking that not every form of conflict is the result of bad social conditions—a point sufficiently clear in the unhappiness of people whose conditions are easy.

There is no cogent objection to internalizing what conflicts can be internalized. Nobody is likely to think that by closely reading a poem of Donne's one is saving the people of the Sudan from starvation. But Richards did not advocate the reading of poems for the purpose of gathering to oneself momentary ecstasies. He argued that "finer adjustment, clearer and more delicate accommodation in reconciliation of impulses in any one field tends to promote it in others." Besides:

> In ordinary life a thousand considerations prohibit for most of us any complete working out of our response; the range and complexity of the impulse-systems involved is less; the need for action, the comparative uncertainty and vagueness of the situation, the intrusion of accidental irrelevancies, inconvenient temporal spacing—the action being too slow or too fast—all these obscure the issue and prevent the full development of the experience. We have to jump to some rough and ready solution. But in the "imaginative experience" these obstacles are removed. Thus what happens here, what precise stresses, preponderances, conflicts, resolutions, and interinanimations, what remote rela-



Political "isms" AND THE Democratic Mind
The Origin, Nature, and Outcome of the Modern Conflict Over Political Sovereignty
RaymannNewton

Question: Is democracy historically inevitable? One political thinker says YES

Following the collapse of the technol-social bases of *ancien regime* political forms, **liberalism** and **socialism** and **conservatism** developed as ideological tools to assist "the one and the few" in their struggles to retain rule over the many. But these modern ideologies, in Raymann Newton's view, offer the still-ruling "one and few" only a brief reprieve from the historically inevitable emergence of *unfettered* democracy.

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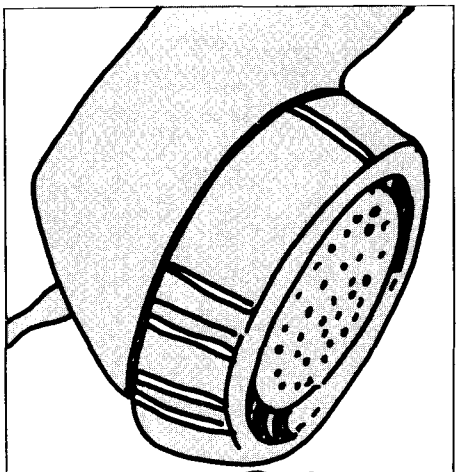

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tionships between different systems of impulses arise, what before unapprehended and inexecutable connections are established, is a matter which, we see clearly, may modify all the rest of life.

True, Richards means all the rest of my particular life, the reader's life. But you have to start somewhere. I disagree with him on many issues; on religion, Christianity, science, and belief, for an acute instance. I find a touch of vulgarity in his position, a casual assumption that because he didn't believe in God, nobody else could. His confidence in science now seems naive, his salvationist notion of poetry, a desperate device. Still, nothing in his program impedes social and political action. All he is saying is that reading can't be done en masse.

John Paul Russo's book is an eminently fair account of Richards's life and work. It is virtually an authorized biography, in the sense that Russo became a close friend of Ivor and Dorothea Richards in their later years, and was regularly in attendance upon the great man. His admiration for Richards is judicious, never servile or uncritical. Yet the book is too long. Russo evidently feels he has to explain at great length things that should be common knowledge, but aren't; he can't assume that the reader knows anything about William James's principles of psychology or has ever heard of McTaggart. But anyone interested enough in Richards to read a book this big about him probably knows more, and can guess more, than Russo gives him credit for.

In the end, the emphasis should fall upon Richards's work as critic and poet. The poems are rather dry. There are signs of a distinct but not a grand talent. Few of the poems move as if by their own will. The criticism is the real, if not always the right, thing. It is a pity that Richards allowed himself to be diverted into purposes that seemed momentous in their day and can now barely be recovered. When I think of his work in criticism, I recall provocations that only he could have achieved; of occasions when he forced other critics to go further in their own direction by disagreeing with his; of extraordinary readings in Plato, Shakespeare, Donne, Coleridge, Hardy, and Eliot. My favorite essay is "*Troilus and Cressida* and Plato," a conjunction new to me when I first came upon it, and since that day indelible.

DENIS DONOGHUE holds the Henry James Chair of English and American Letters at New York University. His most recent book is *England, Their England: Commentaries on English Language and Literature* (Knopf).

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

diplomacy, Mr. LaFeber errs in saying (1) that the Jefferson administration provided "secret help" to the black revolutionaries on Haiti during the Louisiana crisis (it did not); (2) that Jefferson "suddenly ordered the removal of tribes into the trans-Mississippi region," forcing "Napoleon to worry about them, while turning the Midwest into a secure all-white base from which Jefferson could attack New Orleans" (none of these things happened); and (3) that Jefferson obtained authority from Congress "to raise 80,000 men for an assault on the lower Mississippi." (The 80,000 men was the total authorization for an unreformed and still unclassified militia system—essentially a paper force. Jefferson had only 500-700 troops on the lower Mississippi, and they had no orders to contest the arrival of a French military force of occupation in New Orleans.)

As for the rest, I stand by the statements to which Mr. LaFeber has objected, and I invite the community of specialists to see for themselves whether I misrepresented his argument or unfairly criticized his method.

Race Relations 101

To the editors:

I find Robert R. Detlefsen's article to be grossly distorted and selectively narrow in its reporting of Harvard's AWARE Week ("White Like Me," April 10). Our purpose was to provide a series of events to encourage discussions between minority and majority students and faculty on the topic of race relations. I do not maintain that every aspect of AWARE Week was perfect or that I endorse every speaker's opinions. What I do maintain is that the majority of the week's events and speakers were trying to address some of the issues and tensions in race relations on college campuses in particular and in society in general.

My comments on Saturday's final session referred to the spirit of these efforts and certainly not, as Detlefsen implies, to any attempt to censor or inhibit the free expression of faculty members. If people interpret AWARE Week as Detlefsen describes it, then indeed we have moved backward, not forward. Fortunately, I don't sense that many here in Cambridge see the week as he did. Some, I know, don't see the problems and dismiss the week as unnecessary. Others see it as giving only lip service to the many problems on campus. I hope that most see it as a start to a continuing process of addressing racial tensions and problems on campus in a coopera-

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tive and generally non-confrontational way. I accept Detlefsen's assertion that a few speakers may have been intemperate in their comments, but is this not the price of an open and uncensored discussion of an emotional, controversial topic like race relations?

FRED JEWETT
Dean, Harvard College
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Robert R. Detlefsen replies:

Dean Jewett maintains "that the majority of the week's events and of the speakers . . . were trying to address some of the issues and tensions in race relations." Of course they were; I simply reported on the *tone* and *content* of their "address." To that end, my article quoted no fewer than 13 speakers, including the *one* and *only* speaker to have dissented from the AWARE dogma. By contrast, Jewett cites not one speaker or statement to support his contention that the AWARE fiasco was really a wonderful thing.

The Big Countries

To the editors:

Michael M. Lewis ("Dallas Down Under," May 22) is a sneaky bastrop. I was truly enjoying a few guffaws at those Austintatious Aussies, especially when he was comparing them to Donald Trump. When he recounted Alan Bond's purchase of *Les Irises*, I just cackled (hee, hee! It's only a smidgen over a yard wide, and would hardly cover a good mantle unless you stuck it in a big frame). The *Bulletin*'s 100 Most Appalling Australians had me laughing and fanning myself with my Stetson. But then he had to take side with those ignorant Argentineans (who couldn't even send the British down the Gulf of Mexico) and poke fun at Aussie guacamole. You got to understand that at least they got their hearts in the right place. Sounds like my kind of folks. By the way, what other place you talking about? Te- . . . Terlingua?

MARK G. ROBERTS
Dallas, Texas

TRB *continued from page 4*

Federalist redoubt in the Jeffersonian dark age. Under William Cullen Bryant, its editor from 1829 until 1878, it stood successively for Jacksonian Democracy, Free Soil, and Republicanism. It enlisted some of the greatest names in 19th- and early-20th-century journalism: Carl Schurz, Edwin L. Godkin (founder of the *Nation*), Oswald Garrison Villard, Lincoln Steffens. Franklin D. Roosevelt helped save the *Post* twice: in 1918, when he and 33 other wealthy Wilsonians buoyed it up for a few years, and in 1936, when he found a buyer to keep it in business as the New Deal's voice in New York. It had always been restrained in its presentation and directed toward the enlightened upper class. Dorothy Schiff, who owned it from 1939 until she sold it to Murdoch in 1976, made it loudly tabloid, and the country's leading liberal paper.

The *Post* still looks as ramshackle and low-rent as it did in the '50s, but it no longer stands for much of anything beyond reflexive political conservatism and a desire to get department store ads. But it's worth saving simply for the sake of variety. Jefferson's dictum that newspapers without a government is a better state of affairs than a government without newspapers makes sense only when there are plenty of newspapers.

The state of daily print journalism in the United States is not an especially happy one for readers. A vast blandness has settled over the American newsroom, as middle managers dispatched by giant chains smooth out differences and extract profits. For them spreadsheets have more glamour than broadsheets. Competition hardly exists; only 25 cities have competing newspapers today, as against 88 in 1954. The *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times*, both nationally circulated, offer a choice to the elites, but the masses, in most places, must eat what Newhouse, Knight-Ridder, or Gannett puts in front of them. A few regional papers, such as the *Los Angeles Times*, aspire to greatness. Others have abandoned the quest. When the *Boston Globe* fired Michael Janeway and the *Atlanta Constitution* fired Bill Kovach, they signaled their readiness to settle for parochial mediocrity. Too bad for New England and the "New South."

Peter Kalikow and the *New York Post* made a mistake in defenestrating Jane Amsterdam, I think. (Spencer Tracy would never have done such a thing to Katharine Hepburn, at least not in the last reel.) The paper was steadily improving, circulation was holding up despite a newsstand price rise to 40 cents, and the big miscalculations—the Sunday edition fiasco, the price boost—were Kalikow's decisions, not Amsterdam's. Still, Kalikow is at least a person, not a faceless corporation. That's good. And he's spending millions to keep a newspaper afloat. That's good. Maybe someday, if it doesn't fold first, the paper will be good, too. Till then, two out of three will have to do.

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SOME FORTY left-wing lobbies, most conspicuously including People for the American Way, are apparently about to lose their tax-exempt status, because by law you cannot lobby and remain tax-exempt, and all the above were guilty of lobbying against Judge Bork. God's in his heaven and all's right with the world.

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WASHINGTON DIARIST

How I Got That Story

WE "REPORTER-RESEARCHERS" (i.e., abysmally paid interns) know there's a lot of speculation out there about the glamorous lives we lead. So as my term here wheezes to a close, I thought I'd confirm your wildest fantasies by sketching a couple of my own favorite brush-offs by greatness. "This town is so serious," groaned the item on the Washington Talk page of the *New York Times*. It recounted how "James Bennet, investigative reporter for *The New Republic*," had "harassed" Bob Strauss, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee and current lawyer/lobbyist. Apart from this snide promotion, the story was cruelly accurate. I had launched my campaign of harassment only the week before, inspired by a note in that same space that described the following exchange. It seems that Strauss had received a letter thanking him for applying to serve in the Bush administration. He wrote back to say he wasn't interested, etc. *Somehow*, the *New York Times* got hold of the response, and printed it. In the letter, Strauss giggled a bit about the notion of his applying, then delivered this bon mot: "I did not vote in the 1988 election because I did not relate in any way to either of the candidates." Are you laughing? Well, the *Times* almost bust a gut; I sure didn't get it. At the suggestion of an editor, I called Strauss to ask if the former chair had in fact not backed the party's candidate. I was, like Ollie, about to become a pawn in a game played by giants.

THE EDITOR HAD CALLED EARLIer and been told that Strauss had "never voted Republican." A bit too artfully worded. The answer Strauss's secretary fed me was that Strauss had "always voted Democratic." Intrepid intern, I noted that he still had room to wriggle. Why not just say he voted for Dukakis? When I called the next day, she hadn't asked the Maximum Lobbyist my complex question. The following day, she still hadn't checked, and Bob had flown the coop. I grabbed the chance to use one of those neat journalist tricks I'd read about, muttering—my voice reluctant, yet steely—that we'd have to print that Strauss wouldn't give a straight answer. She seemed kind of angry when she hung up. That afternoon, I got a hand-delivered letter ("DICTATED VIA LONG DISTANCE") from Strauss: "Everyone knew that was a tongue-in-cheek letter. I can refer you to Jim Baker or Howell Raines [of the *NYT*], to whom Baker, as an additional joke, gave the letter.... This will advise you that I voted for Michael Dukakis...." Gosh, I thought, what a bunch of cards. That's that.

SOMEHOW, ANNOTATED EXCERPTS of the letter appeared the next day in the amazingly nimble *New York Times* (now *that*'s investigative reporting). The *Times* just couldn't understand why I didn't get the gag; after all, Strauss, it reported, is "known to brighten any social occasion" (sort of like a lava lamp, I guess). The story also noted that I "at latest count had telephoned Mr. Strauss three times." Interns take note: it's bad form to call back a source who won't give you a straight answer; the *Times* is so good they didn't call me even once. The more vital lesson: don't mess with insiders. I mean, add it up—Strauss got to "clarify" his first note, the *Times* got to stroke a prodigious source, and I got to look like a goon. Go back to fact-checking.

FATE INTERVENED. WORD CAME that Ron Brown, chairman of the DNC and lawyer/lobbyist (sense a pattern?), had invested in a local radio station. Clearly a mission for a kamikaze intern. At the suggestion of an editor (sense another pattern?), I checked into it. The deal did look odd. In 1987 NBC announced that it would sell WKYS, a top-ranked FM music station, to a minority-controlled firm. This enlightened decision had two sources: a hefty bribe—in the form of a capital-gains tax break—that we taxpayers give to such high-minded corporations; and dexterous mau-mauing by a group that tries to move minorities into broadcasting. From over ten minority-controlled firms, NBC picked Albimar Communications Inc., a Boston-based radio group. Brown, with no background in radio, had recently become vice chairman of Albimar, with a ten percent share. How? He's old friends with the chairman, Bertram Lee, a broadcast hustler who was Jesse Jackson's national campaign finance co-chairman. Brown's good fortune, of course, might mean only that he has nice friends and knows a good deal when it jumps him. It might also mean that Albimar counted on his political muscle to win the bid. But if Brown actually put up cash to match his ten percent share, who would say such a thing? I called him to check. Brown clearly has a great career ahead as party chair; he's already as good at not returning calls as Strauss. In fact, he's so good that after a while even his press assistant wouldn't take my calls.

MEANWHILE, SEVERAL RIVAL BIDders were saying nasty things, such as: Albimar had benefited from its connections. Sour grapes, thought I. But then the investment banker who worked for Albimar said that his client enjoyed "favored status." He pointed to the broadcast reputation of one member, and to the connections of Brown and Lee: "[redacted]n sure that some of those connections were utilized as appropriate." Hmmm. Judging by the final agreement, Albimar's members put up little or no cash, financing the deal through loans. If they turn around and sell, they could easily pay their creditors and pull in a mighty profit for all investors.

PARTICULARLY IF THOSE INVESTors put no money down. Brown's admirable persistence in not calling me back finally drove me to doff my intern power threads, put on my hard shoes and suit, and seek him out at a press breakfast downtown. I approached him as the guests were leaving, looking determined, quivering. He glared. "You're that KYS guy, right?" Um. Simper. Grovel. "Listen, I don't understand why you're interested! I mean, why does THE NEW REPUBLIC care about this?" I mumbled something about his being party chair, about this being an "unusual" deal. He pointed out that the trade press said they paid fair market price. I pointed out that no one in the trade press knew how much they paid. "That's right! And it's none of their business!" There was a brief pause while we both pondered that exchange and recalibrated. Then, at last, I got to ask The Question. "I put up a substantial amount of money," he said. "It was not a gift." He said that he shares the liability for Albimar's monster loans. Then someone sidled up to him, ending my exclusive interview. But it didn't matter. Those few words were all Brown needed to kill my story, since I could find nothing to challenge (or support) them. Squashed, I returned to fact-checking.

OF COURSE, NONE OF THIS HAS done my swelling paranoia any good. Every day now I open the *New York Times* with sweaty hands. A couple of weeks ago, gratuitously, that paper ridiculed me for using the word "synergy" in a story. OK, maybe I deserved it, but lots of other guys used the word. Why smack an intern? They're clearly just gearing up for the real hammer blow: "James Bennet, snot-nosed harasser-punk for *The New Republic*, seems to have a thing about Democratic party chairmen...." Oh—by the way: Anyone out there want to give me a job?

JAMES BENNET

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Rural Electrification

A POWERFUL PRESCRIPTION

By Bob Bergland

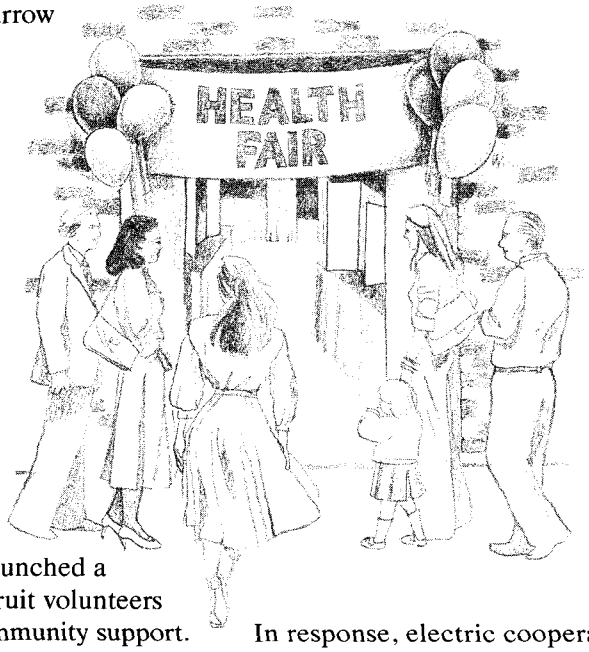
There's something special about living in America's wide open spaces. But when the nearest hospital is 45 miles away—like it is for people around Center, North Dakota—having an ambulance to narrow the distance can be a matter of life and death.

Last year, when that town nearly lost its ambulance service, the local electric cooperative did something about it.

Working with the local district health nurse, Oliver Mercer Electric Co-op quickly launched a campaign to recruit volunteers and mobilize community support. Today, people around Center have the comfort of knowing their ambulance service is ready to go in case of an emergency.

This kind of community action and leadership is what rural electrification is all about. Owned by the people they serve, the nation's 1,000 rural electric systems are "people" organizations, working with others to keep community foundations strong.

It's a given that adequate health care is a necessity, no matter the geographic location. But in many parts of rural America, health care systems are in critical need of attention. Rural hospitals are closing at alarming rates. Health care delivery services are severely strained.



In response, electric cooperatives are helping health care providers galvanize local resources to meet those problems head-on. That's why in Arkansas, Carroll Electric Co-op sponsors a "wellness" program that augments the local hospital's services. Health "fairs" conducted by Randolph Electric in North Carolina and Farmers Electric Co-op in New Mexico bring together health professionals and trained volunteers. They provide local residents with screening, referral and information services for health concerns like blood pressure, cholesterol, and cancer. And to help electric co-ops initiate and coordinate local activities, their national association now operates the National Rural Health Network.

Bob Bergland is Executive Vice President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Multiply these local efforts all around the country and you can see how electric co-ops are agents of progress . . . organizations whose helping hand and can-do spirit touch the lives of millions of Americans.

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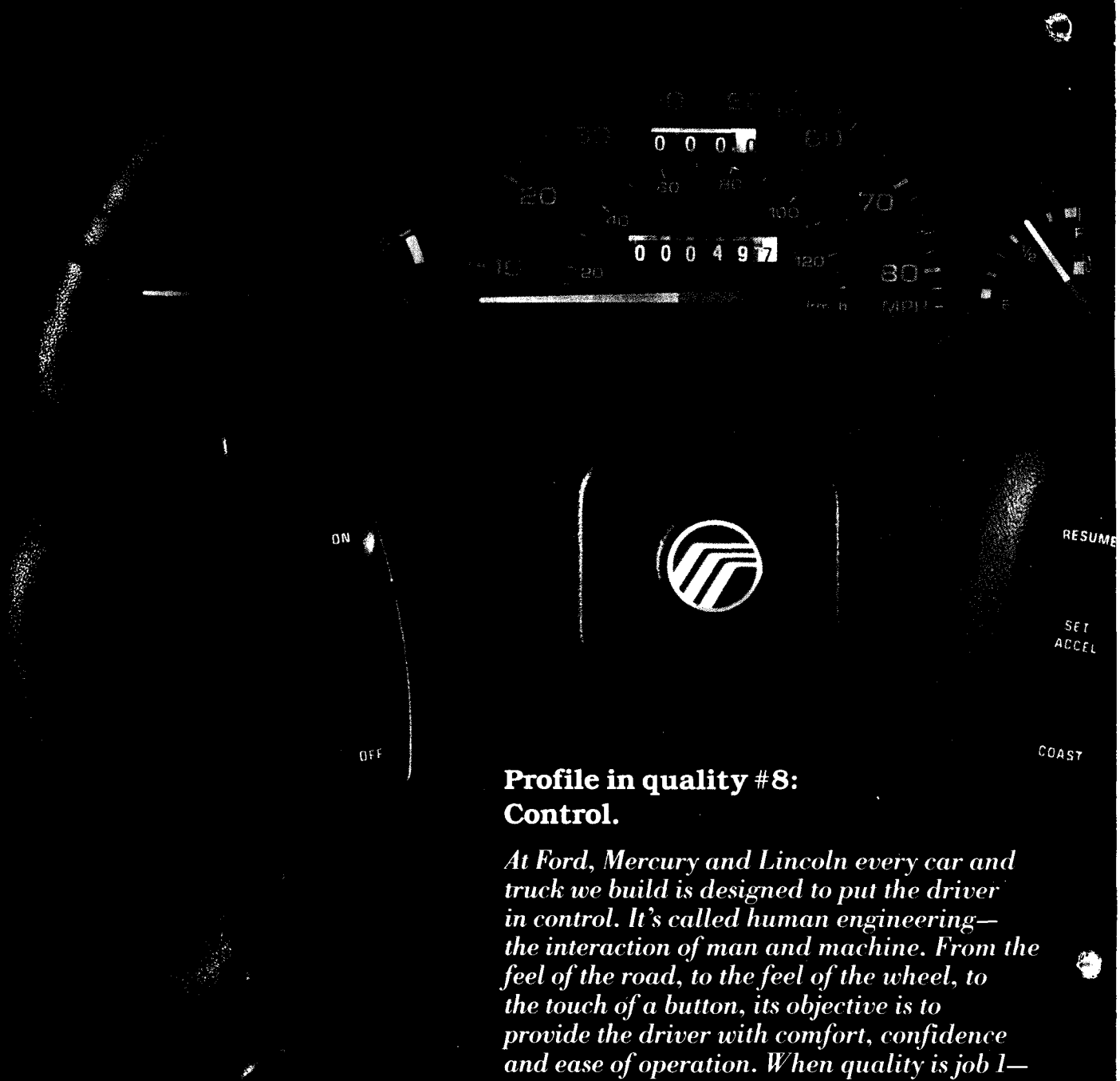

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